



THE
ADMIRAL'S
LITTLE COMPANION
ELIZABETH LINCOLN GOULD



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“IT ISN'T A DREAM”

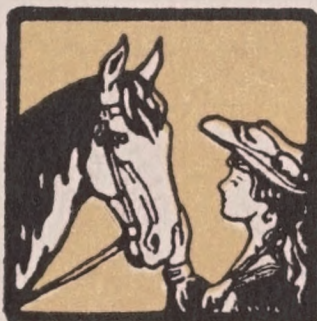
THE ADMIRAL'S LITTLE COMPANION

BY
ELIZABETH LINCOLN GOULD

AUTHOR OF

"THE ADMIRAL'S GRANDDAUGHTER"
"THE ADMIRAL'S LITTLE HOUSEKEEPER"
"THE ADMIRAL'S LITTLE SECRETARY"

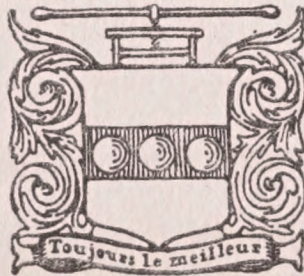
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Introduction

“The Admiral’s Granddaughter” told the story of one autumn at Beaumont Corners when Nancy Beaumont almost parted from her dearest treasure, for love of her brother and the Admiral. In “The Admiral’s Little Housekeeper” Nancy has many good times with friends, and some anxiety over a secret kept for weeks by her old “mammy,” Aunt Sylvia. The third book, “The Admiral’s Little Secretary,” tells of the experiences of the Beaumont family in the city to which they went for a few months for Nancy’s sake. In the present book the Beaumonts are at home again with old and new friends around them, and once more a treasure is saved—this time for the Admiral.

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The Admiral's Little Companion

The Admiral's Little Companion

CHAPTER I

IN THE BEAUMONT GARDEN

“RED, an’ pink, an’ gold, an’ white—red, an’ pink, an’ gold, an’ white,” chanted Aunt Sylvia. “If dey don’ look handsome, den I don’ know what handsome is! I’m right glad I had ’Vanus bring my rocking-chair out hyah, so I can smell de roses an’ breave in de air. An’ de sun feels good to my pore ole bones; ya-as-m, it cert’nly does.”

Aunt Sylvia stretched her arms above her head and gave a wide yawn of content. She was sitting in an old yellow rocking-chair, carried out into the garden half an hour before by Sylvanus, and placed in a spot where his mother could survey the rose arbor and the vines and bushes near it, choosing at her leisure the best buds and blossoms to be cut with her big shears and dropped into the long wicker basket which lay on the grass beside her chair. She had cut a long spray of little yellow roses whose petals were faintly edged

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with pink, and now held them up to the sun, looking at them with critical eyes.

“Seems almost 's if the pink aidge was a teeny mite pinker 'n usu'l,” she mused, “but I cyant tell—maybe 'tis de same as always. De pretties' rose dat grows, 'tis—Pride o' de Souf—an' well worf de name.”

She let the spray drop on the others in the gathering basket and folded her hands, rocking to and fro in the sunshine, talking to herself.

“Apple-blossom time I mos' fell sick o' longing, way off in de city,” she murmured, “but now it's rose time, an' we's home again, an' comp'ny's coming, an' de worl' is full o' goodness, I ain' got room for nuffin but joy! Dip into de rose cup an' take yo' fill, little greedy bee! Dere's plenty lef' to fill de air o' June. Ya-a-sir, dere's honey 'nuff fo' all de bees in de worl', I reckon, right hyah in dis garden. An' my little queen o' sweetness coming right dis way. Dere's her sure-'nuff voice talking. Listen now! Ain' dat a sweet soun', little greedy bee?”

“Down this path and along the larkspur hedge ——” the soft, clear voice of Nancy Beaumont seemed to her mammy's ears to match the lovely, golden quiet of the early summer day. She held her breath to listen, as

the bee came out from the rose cup and swung off, humming, to another bush.

"What's larkspur?" came in a boy's voice, and there was the sound of arrested footsteps, and then Nancy's laugh.

"Oh, I don't know how to tell you what larkspurs are," she said. "See, there are some, growing all lovely purple in the sun; and there are pale lavender ones and there are real blue ones—those are the commonest of all, and perhaps the very prettiest. Don't you like them?"

"They stand up kind of like soldiers," said the boy's voice. "I like that about 'em. I guess I like everything about 'em, excepting they don't smell much, do they? It always seems as if flowers ought to smell as pretty as they look. Roses do."

"Yes, so they do," said Nancy, "and we'll be with the roses in just a minute. You aren't tired, yet, are you?"

"Tired!" the boy's laugh rang out and Aunt Sylvia smiled at the sound of it. "Nobody could be tired here! My head hasn't jumped once since we got here, and last night I never winked after I got into bed till I waked up when Aunt Sylvia came into the room. I had a bang-up sleep. Nancy, would the Admiral

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mind my saying that? I can't talk educated all at once."

"Oh, no, he wouldn't mind one bit," laughed Nancy. "Only, he's keeping a list of the words you use that he doesn't quite understand, and he has me look them all up in the dictionary, and when I can't find them he puts a little red cross against them; that means he'll ask you to explain them to him some day. But I'm quite sure he won't need to put 'bang-up' on the list. Now let's find Aunt Sylvia and decide on the very best place to plant your geranium."

A moment later they reached the rose arbor and walking through it came to Aunt Sylvia in the rocking-chair. Nancy and the boy carried between them a wide basket in which was a good-sized pink geranium in a pot. Nancy's right hand and the boy's left held the handles of the basket. The boy's right arm hung rather close to his side.

"He wouldn't let me carry it all by myself, Aunt Sylvia," Nancy announced to her old mammy as they set the basket down on the grass, and seated themselves one at each side of it, facing Aunt Sylvia. "He said it was heavy for a girl to carry, though 'if he'd been as strong as he used to be it wouldn't have been *anything* for him!'"

"Dat's de way a boy feel, honey," said Aunt Sylvia, looking with approval at the big-eyed, thin-cheeked, little Irish lad whose head was thrown back as he sniffed the rose-scented air. "Ya-as, chile, dat's de way he feel an' dat's de way he *better* feel, 'kase den he'll grow up like de Beaumont gen'lemen, an' wait on de ladies proper."

"I guess there's no danger of a Patrick Donovan getting such fine manners he'll be taken for a Beaumont," laughed the boy. "It's all right for the kids to call me 'King Arthur,' and Nancy if she wants to, for fun, but outside o' the story-telling, Patrick Donovan is what I am. An' I don't mind. If I'd been a reg'lar swell kid like King Arthur must have been when he was a boy, I'd never have—I'd never have been here," he finished hastily. "Gee! but this is a great garden. I've read about 'em, but I never thought I'd be sitting right square in the middle of one!" and his thin fingers closed around a little handful of grass blades as if to make sure they were real.

Nancy began to tell him about the different roses, and Aunt Sylvia listened and watched the two faces. It was an experiment of the Admiral's, this transplanting the little newsboy who had saved Nancy's life at the risk of his own, and had spent many weeks in the

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hospital with a broken arm and cut head as a consequence. The Admiral's gratitude and his recognition of unusual qualities in the boy had led to the plan for little Patrick Donovan's summer at Beaumont Corners, and would lead to many more plans for his future. At first Aunt Sylvia doubted the wisdom of this transplanting, but already she was being won over.

"If 't hadn't been fo' dat boy my lamb wouldn't ebber been sitting *anywhar* ag'in," she murmured as she rocked and listened. "An' he cert'nly is de gratefulest boy in his actions, even if he don' say much 'bout it. He come along up hyah wid de fam'ly yest'-day jess same as if he belonged, but he helped 'Vanus tote all de bags an' bundles, an' if he'd had de full use o' his right arm same as his lef', I don' know as there'd 'a' been anyt'ing fo' 'Vanus to tote. W'at you axin' me, honey?"

"Where do you think we'd better put the geranium, Aunt Sylvia?" asked Nancy. "That's what King Arthur and I can't quite decide. We'd like it to have plenty of room to spread so that when it's taken up out of the ground to go to the hospital again next autumn it will be a great big bush, big enough for the children to play it's a tree."

"What do you t'ink o' dat bed whar de ambrosy

plants grows, front o' dem, whar dat little pindlin' rose died away?" asked Aunt Sylvia after a moment's reflection. "'Pears to me like dat would be a firs'-rate place for dat pinky geran'um."

"It's the very best possible place," said Nancy with conviction. "Do you think we might do it ourselves, or will it need to be planted very deep, Aunt Sylvia?"

"Better let 'Vanus 'tend to it," said Aunt Sylvia. "You two chillun jes' sit still an' drink in de sunshine. I wants to ax you a question, boy. Has you got any middle to dat name o' yours?—yo' real name, I'm axin' 'bout."

"Sure I have," said the boy. "I'll sign it to the letter I'm going to write to the hospital this afternoon—Patrick G. Donovan—the G. stands for Glenn; that was my mother's name before she married my father."

"Oh, I think that's a splendid name," cried Nancy. "I'm sure grandfather would like to call you Glenn. Would you mind?"

"He can call me anything he likes," said the boy gaily. "I'd be a queer fish to care what he calls me, when he's giving me all this," and he spread his arms in a gesture which included Nancy, Aunt Sylvia, the garden and the sky. "I knew he didn't like the sound

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of Patrick very well, though it's a good name, all the same."

"Oh, of course it is," said Nancy quickly. "It's a fine name, only the other sounds a little more——"

"Sounds more like a story-book name," and the boy gave his wide, good-natured smile; "and it matches this place better. Why don't you all call me Glenn if you like the sound of it? King Arthur is sort of—well, it belongs to the kiddies I tell stories to, first, and sometimes it makes me feel as if I was putting on airs," he ended bluntly, wriggling his shoulders, and looking at Nancy in the hope that she might understand.

And Nancy did; so did Aunt Sylvia, who nodded her head violently several times, murmuring, "'Course he do! 'course he do feel jes' dat-a-way!"

"I shall begin to call you Glenn right away," said Nancy. "Oh, Glenn, don't you hear something clink-clinking along the path? I do. I'm pretty sure it's lemonade glasses on a tray, and Betty is bringing them to us. Yes, here she is—and there are frosted cakes, Glenn, too!"

Rosy-cheeked Betty in the stiffest and whitest of aprons, with a little cap on her head, came through the rose arbor, and over the short grass of the little

path, to the place where Aunt Sylvia sat in her rocking-chair with the two children beside her. Betty tried very hard to keep back her smiles, but she could not quite do it, when Nancy spoke to her.

“Oh, Betty, how nice it is to see you bringing luncheon over the grass,” said Nancy, as the tray changed hands, and Aunt Sylvia set it on her lap, scrutinizing the lemonade and cakes with a keen eye. “Are you glad to be at home, Betty, after the lovely time you had at Mrs. Carter’s, learning all sorts of things?”

Betty’s smile widened until her eyes almost disappeared behind the creases of her rosy cheeks.

“Indeed, Miss Nancy, there’s no place in the world I’d sooner be than at Beaumont Corners,” she said, and then added, shyly twisting one corner of her apron between her fingers—“now you and your folks have come home, I mean.”

“Thank you, Betty,” said Nancy as the maid turned away, after a little bobbing curtsy, and Aunt Sylvia nodded approval.

“She hasn’t forgotten all I taught her, I’s glad to see dat,” said Aunt Sylvia. “’Course I got to practice her a leetle mite on dat curchy; she’s got kind o’ stiff enduring all dese mont’s we’s been away, but she

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'members de gen'ral motions. I spec' some day she'll make a firs'-rate lady's maid if she don' get biggety notions—an' I reckon I can keep her from getting 'em—ya-as-m, I reckon I can," and she pursed her lips and nodded again with the air of one whose plans are fully matured. "Now, Glenn, is you gwine take a glass an' hand it real pretty to Miss Nancy?"

The boy sprang to his feet, and seized the glass indicated by Aunt Sylvia with both hands. She expected to see its contents spilled, but it reached Nancy without the loss of a drop.

"You did dat mighty well," commended Aunt Sylvia. "I reckon your handing out med'cine to dose little sick folks at de hospital has made you more carefuller dan mos' boys. Now you pass Miss Nancy de cakes."

The boy did as he was told, and then receiving his own glass and a frosted cake, he reseated himself cautiously and began his feast.

"Say, Nancy," he blurted out after a moment, "I can't believe it's true—me, sitting here on the grass, and having a frosted cake and lemonade—and the city way off—and no papers to sell—and that room with the blue flowers on the wall, and that bed soft as snow to sleep on—and those muffins for breakfast—say,

Nancy, I keep thinking I'll wake up and find it's all gone—I do, honest and true !”

Aunt Sylvia began to hum, loudly, turning her face away from the two children, to look back at the rose arbor.

“I see a branch dat needs some 'tention,” she hummed, setting words to a rambling tune ; “I see a branch dat needs it, so it do ! Oh, whar's dat 'Vanus ?”

“It isn't a dream,” said Nancy earnestly. “Grandfather would like to make it so true that all the rest would be like a dream—the years when you were cold so often, and hungry, and had no real home, and worked so hard. Oh, grandfather would like to make you forget that, Ki—Glenn. Because there'll never be any more of that.”

Her soft eyes were very pitying as she looked at him, but the boy flushed and shook his head, his own eyes clear and shining.

“No,” he said, “I don't want to forget any of it, Nancy. Because when I'm grown up if I'm lucky enough to get to be a doctor, the way the Admiral and the General plan, I'll want to remember exactly how it feels to be cold and hungry and be knocked around, and yet have good friends and good times in spite of it—so I'll know how to help boys without letting 'em

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see I'm sorry for 'em. I never wanted anybody to be sorry for me," and the chin of little Patrick Glenn Donovan took on its most independent look; "'long as I had my two arms and legs I was all right—and my head," he added.

"And you almost lost all of them for me," said Nancy sorrowfully.

But the boy laughed, and sprang to his feet.

"And a lucky day it was for me," he cried. "Oh, I'm telling you true when I say I don't want to forget anything, Nancy, but all the same it wouldn't be any cinch to go back to living the old way, after you folks have let me try having somebody to look after me, and to belong to. I'm so full of it, I feel like a sky-rocket, just ready to go off. Let's go help Aunt Sylvia 'tend to that branch, shan't we? I want to be doing things, whenever there's a chance, or else I couldn't take all you're giving me. I've got to pay my way when I can, Nancy. All I can do, studying, to please your grandfather, and learning manners—'twon't be half enough to show the way I feel—you can just bet on that!"

CHAPTER II

DESDEMONA

ABOUT three-quarters of a mile from the big house at Beaumont Corners there stood a great oak tree which spread its branches far out over the road, so high from the ground that they did not interfere with travelers who passed that way, but not high enough to keep the tracery of dancing leaves from showing on the sunlit road.

While Nancy and Patrick Glenn Donovan were sitting on the grass, enjoying their lemonade and cakes, a slender, freckle-faced little girl with red hair that gleamed like burnished copper in the sunshine stood gazing intently at the dancing shadows on the road. A long-sleeved, high-necked apron, of a soft brown color, covered her dress, and her forehead was puckered with earnestness.

In the bushes, across the road from the great oak, there was a camp-stool, and in front of it stood a rough easel. On the stool lay a box of crayons.

After a few minutes the little girl walked back to

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the camp-stool, seated herself, and began to work on the half-finished sketch which stood on the easel.

"I wish I could just slap some knowledge into myself," she said in a fierce little voice, after working steadily for ten minutes. "I can't *make* those shadows right, and I don't know *why* I can't—and I don't want Mr. Sigourney to be disappointed when he comes up from the brook for luncheon, and he will be. Oh—there—I believe that's better! I do, true as you live!"

She fell to work with renewed energy. Then she stopped, leaned back, half shut her eyes, nodded to herself, and began to whistle, at first softly, then louder and louder, with many trills and scales. A man, coming across a meadow, a little way down the road, smiled as he heard her.

"Mona's done something that satisfies her," he said to himself. "That's good. She's earned a little vacation, and I'll give it to her, with mother's consent. She shall go to see her beloved Nancy this afternoon."

He stepped through a gap in the stone wall, out to the road, and in a moment came in sight of the little whistling girl. When she saw him the whistling ended abruptly, in the very middle of a tune, and the little freckled face beamed with welcome.

"Please, *please* come here quick, Mr. Sigourney,"

cried Desdemona Macdonald, "and tell me whether I've really made those shadows look like shadows or whether they just look like dabs of mud, the way they have every time I've tried before."

She sat with her eyes fastened on the artist's face as he scanned the work on her easel with a critic's keenness. She held her breath, trying to guess from his expression what he might be going to say to her.

"We-ll," he said at last, his down-dropped lids hiding the look in his eyes.

"Well what?" begged the little girl. "Please don't tease me, Mr. Sigourney! It's so important! If I can't do a thing like that, why, I might just as well go home and stay in the basement and help with the washing and answer the telephone, instead of staying here in this perfectly beautiful country with your mother, who hardly lets me do any work at all, and taking your valuable time on false pretenses! That's the way it seems to me, truly."

The artist opened his eyes wide and let the little girl see the look of pleasure and something very like pride grow in his face.

"Mona Macdonald," he said gravely, "I solemnly promise not to tease you this morning, at any rate. You've done a very good piece of work—a *very* good

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piece of work. No one could possibly mistake those for anything but shadows. I begin to respect myself a little bit as a teacher, and to have the greatest belief in the ability of my pupil. But you mustn't be so tragic, my child. Even if you had not succeeded with the shadows this morning, you might have done it to-morrow. 'Art is long,' you know," and he smiled at Desdemona in a reassuring way.

"I guess I know," said the little girl; "our art teacher at school used to say that every day, and I should think she would have. She's pretty old and she's never got beyond pitchers and vases and still-life. And you couldn't pour out of one of her pitchers, Mr. Sigourney, for there was always something queer about their shape; they bulged in the wrong places; she said they were 'from the antique,' but I never could see why the people that lived in Greece and Rome should have liked to have things spilled all over them any more than we should to-day."

"Speaking of ancient Greece and Rome," said Mr. Sigourney, taking out his watch and consulting it, "don't you think it's about time we had some dinner, Miss Desdemona Macdonald? I've painted till the sky begins to look green, and I'm sure you've been at it long enough. Let's go home to mother, and this after-

noon we'll all take a holiday and go to Beaumont Corners."

Desdemona gave a little shriek of joy, and clasped her easel, picture and box of crayons to her heart, thereby decorating the brown apron with black smudges of various sizes and shapes.

"Oh," she cried rapturously, "I didn't suppose there was any chance of my seeing her again before Sunday at any rate. I told her yesterday that of course she understood I was here to work just as hard as ever I could so you wouldn't regret letting me come, and I said, 'It's very different with you, Nancy, but I have my way to make in art and the world, and even friendship must be—must be secondary.'"

"'Secondary' was a very large, handsome word to use in that connection, Mona," said Mr. Sigourney without a suspicion of a smile, "but I think we'll manage to keep friendship pretty well in line with art for the next few years. And so that we may be fitted for both, let us now seek nourishing food, or we shall fall by the wayside. I shall, at all events."

Desdemona's face grew less serious, and she even laughed a little as they stepped out into the road and trudged along, whistling softly together. They had not far to go before they came to a grass-grown driveway

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which wound across a field. The field changed to a gently-rising slope, and at its highest point there was a long, brown, green-roofed bungalow. Three months before it had been a long, yellow, gray-roofed house, sadly in need of paint inside and out, and with shingles and window panes missing. When Mr. Sigourney decided to buy instead of hiring it he went to Potterville, taking with him a young architect; together they spent a week planning changes and renovation, and within six weeks, to the amazement of all Potterville, the ugly old house was transformed into an attractive bungalow.

"It looks all fair enough," remarked Bartley Pearson, the Potterville postmaster, on his return from a thorough inspection of the premises, "but what I say is that time is the test of all work, and it remains to be seen how what those city workmen have throwed together in six weeks will stand the wear and tear o' years. I'm not making any predictions—all I say is—wait!"

Mr. Sigourney referred to this warning utterance, which had been promptly reported to him, as he and Desdemona wound up the road to the bungalow.

"Doesn't seem as if there could be much wear and tear in this lovely place, does it, Mona?" he said. "How does it look to you, the more you see of it?"

“It looks perfectly entrancing, just the way it did the very first minute I set my eyes on it,” said Desdemona fervently. “Oh, Mr. Sigourney, for pity’s sake, look at my apron, all smudged with black, and it was put on clean this morning. What will take out the smudges? Haven’t you something in your box that will do it, before we get to the house? Here, we could stop behind this tree! No, it’s too late; there’s your mother in the window. Oh, dear, I hope she won’t be discouraged beyond words with me!”

A dainty little white-haired lady appeared in the doorway, a smile of welcome on her face. Desdemona flew to her and exhibited the offending smudges without a moment’s delay.

“Look at me,” she said dolefully. “I’m a sight, Mrs. Sigourney! If you said I wasn’t fit to be allowed inside your nice clean house I couldn’t blame you!”

Mrs. Sigourney twirled her about gently, and unfastened the row of buttons which secured the apron in the back. Then she smilingly bade the little girl put down her easel and other things and slip the apron off.

“There!” she said, patting the pretty gingham that appeared, fresh and spotless, when this was accomplished. “Now you’re all right. Don’t you know I’m used to painting aprons, my dear?”

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"Oh, thank you!" breathed Desdemona gratefully. "You have the most comfortable ways! I wish you'd look at my sketch, please, Mrs. Sigourney, and tell me if you'd know what it is meant for. It will be very encouraging for me if you can tell."

"Let me see," said the little white-haired lady, half shutting her eyes, and holding the sketch well away from her. "Why, of course, it's plain as day! It's the old oak and its shadows on the road."

"I hardly believed it was as plain as that," said Desdemona after a long-drawn breath of delight. "I shall write to mother this very night and tell her that at last I begin to have some hopes of my future."

"At last," echoed Mrs. Sigourney, laughing. "Why, child, we've been here less than a week."

"I know it," admitted Desdemona; "at least, I know it with my brain, Mrs. Sigourney, but my *feelings* are that it is a great deal longer than that since I shook the coal dust of our basement off my skirt for the last time and said good-bye to my family and friends."

"That sounds so affecting that I am almost in tears," said the artist, "or else it's hunger that is moistening my eyes, mother. Can't we have luncheon before Desdemona is overcome by the recollection of her sad partings? I should hate to have Nancy see her with

swollen eyelids, and I'm planning that we'll go to Beaumont Corners to spend the afternoon, we three."

Desdemona's standing in her class at school had been so high that it had been made possible for her to leave a week or more before the term was over, without any loss. The principal of the school had gladly consented after a short talk with Mr. Sigourney.

"It will do her good to be outdoors all day long," he had agreed with the artist. "She's all brain and fire, and a city basement is no place for a child. Desdemona is thinner even than usual, this spring."

"She's never going back to the basement if my mother and I have our way," said Mr. Sigourney. "We have a plan for her if it can be carried through—and I think it can."

The few days of country air and living had made a great difference in the little girl. Her cheeks would never have the pink which Nancy's had not lost with her months in the city, but they had a warm tint of their own, which showed in spite of the freckles with which her small, spirited face was plentifully besprinkled. As she walked along the country road that afternoon, sometimes between Mrs. Sigourney and her son, sometimes at one side or the other, as she darted across to get a closer view of some roadside

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flower or bush, her companions exchanged glances of amusement over her head.

Desdemona happened to look up from her inspection of a laurel blossom in time to intercept one of these glances.

"Are you laughing at me?" she questioned. "Well, I don't care a bit if you are, for I know it must be funny to see me flying around so. But that's the way I shall probably be all my life; always hurrying to look at things first one side and then the other. Our art teacher at school thought I lacked concentration. I wonder if I do. I hope not, for then you'd regret having undertaken to teach me, Mr. Sigourney. But I couldn't concentrate on those bulging vases we had to draw at school; truly I couldn't, Mr. Sigourney. Do you think that shows a great lack?"

"I shan't worry about it yet," said the artist. "I shall only suggest one thing, Mona; that is, that as you seem to have lifted a rather unusually heavy supply of the roadside dust on to your shoes, perhaps you'd like to walk in the grass a little way before we arrive at Beaumont Corners."

"Mercy! how they do look!" cried Desdemona gazing at her gray-white feet in dismay. "And Nancy is such a little pinky, I always like to be as neat as pins

when I'm with her. Should you mind walking slowly just a minute while I scrub these off with this large leaf? I think I can do them nicely, and then I'll catch up with you."

Mr. Sigourney and his mother walked very slowly for a few minutes and then, just as they reached the Beaumont driveway, they heard the rush of Desdemona's feet, coming through the roadside grass. Her face was scarlet, and her breath came in little gasps.

"I've—rubbed—them—off," she panted, "and—then—I had—to wash my hands—at the spring, and now I'm all right except that I caught my skirt on a blackberry vine. You'd be surprised to realize how narrow the grass place is and how the bushes reach right out and fasten on you. Will you please just pin over the torn place, so it will look like a fold that was intended, Mrs. Sigourney? I always have extra pins in my belts because I'm so unfortunate. I don't know as there ever would be a fold in just such a place on one hip, with the other plain, would there? Well, never mind, I can tuck my handkerchief in my belt—so—and let the end dangle down over the fold. There, doesn't that look well enough, so the Admiral won't notice it?"

She was so eager and hopeful that Mrs. Sigourney could not help telling her the handkerchief would serve

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her purpose, though Desdemona was able to put only one point of it inside her belt to accomplish the desired result.

“I’ll pin it,” she said gaily, “so it can’t possibly slip. There! now I’m ready for Admiral Beaumont or anybody!”

CHAPTER III

TACT AND TEA

THE Admiral entertained Mrs. Sigourney on the porch ; Mr. Sigourney strolled about the place until he came upon Aunt Sylvia pulling strawberries in the kitchen doorway so that she might keep an eye on Betty and at the same time enjoy the air. She cordially invited the artist to join her, after he had begged the privilege with due meekness, and he seated himself on the old door-stone at her feet. He loved above all things to make Aunt Sylvia talk of " befo' de wah days."

While he listened to her and Mrs. Sigourney listened to the Admiral, Nancy, Desdemona and the newly christened Glenn were out in the garden, near the sundial, talking of many things, and listening for the sound of the light wagon on the road from the village, which would mean the return of Sylvanus with the mail. Desdemona had expressed her approval of the boy's name with great promptness.

"It's queer we never thought about your having a middle name," she said. "I haven't any, so I never

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remember about it with other people. Have you a middle name, Nancy ?”

“ I have several,” and Nancy dimpled. “ Would you like to hear all of them ? My full name is Nancy Eudora Cunningham Frost Beaumont.”

“ Crickey !” ejaculated Glenn. “ What’s the good of all those ? What made them give you so many ? ”

“ Nancy is one for one grandmother and Eudora is for the other,” explained Nancy. “ Cunningham was my mother’s mother’s mother’s name, and Frost was her father’s name. You see they are really all family names.”

“ Sure,” said the boy, while Desdemona knit her brows, absorbed in the endeavor to remember something. “ Well, if they’d done that way with me, taking grandfathers in place of grandmothers my name would have been Patrick Michael O’Shaughnessy Glenn Donovan. It’s lucky it wasn’t ; that would have finished me up for the Admiral ! ”

“ My name,” said Desdemona, smoothing out her forehead, “ would not have been Desdemona at all. It would have been Jane Maria Mattheson Carmichael Macdonald.”

“ Good for you,” said the boy. “ I’d stick to Desdemona if I were in your place.”

"I intend to," said the little girl loftily. "I'd have to, anyway, I guess," she added. "Nancy, don't I hear wheels?"

"You do," said Nancy. "I've been hearing them for a minute or two, but I didn't want to interrupt what you and Glenn were saying. That's the wagon with Sylvanus, and we can run out to the driveway and meet him; then if there should happen to be a letter for me I can take it from him, and read it to you. We needn't hurry, Glenn, for he'll come rather slowly up the driveway."

"It seems queer for anybody to have to tell me about not hurrying," said the boy. "I never walked much till within the last few weeks; I was always running. Don't look like that, Nancy. I'm not worrying about it. The General says I've run the flesh off my bones, and now I'll have a chance to get some on again. Mrs. Leahy always said I was an awful fat baby."

When they reached the driveway, the wagon was not in sight, but a moment later it appeared, driven by Sylvanus, who sat very erect with his whip at the proper angle, although behind him in the wagon lay a bag of flour, a sack of potatoes and several large bundles, while a broom and a mop handle slid about

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among the other things, and a couple of tin pails rose and fell with a cheerful sound.

"Is there a letter for me, Sylvanus?" asked Nancy, as the wagon came to a halt, and Sylvanus touched his hat with his whip hand in what he considered a most elegant manner, and raised the reins somewhat higher as he made his salute.

"The entire mail is in this bag, Miss Nancy," said Sylvanus, handing her the old leather bag as if it were by a new arrangement that the letters had been placed in it, whereas in reality the Beaumont mail bag had been used, save when Sylvanus forgot it, for many years; it was indeed much older than Nancy.

"Oh, there are two for me," she said delightedly, as she sorted the letters; "one from Marguerite and one from Jack; and there's one for grandfather from Jack, too, and one from General Compton, and one for Aunt Sylvia, from Mrs. Compton; oh, she'll be so pleased! There, Sylvanus, you take all the rest up to the house, and when you give them to grandfather, say that I will be there very soon, in just a few minutes."

"Certainly, Miss Nancy, I will execute your desires," said Sylvanus, and with another elaborate salute he drove on.

"Say, where did he learn all those big words he

uses?" asked Glenn, to whom the darkey was already a great source of amusement. Sylvanus had so far taken very little notice of him, but that did not trouble the boy in the least; he had no feeling of importance and saw no reason for special favors of any kind, while Sylvanus, on his part, had more than a little jealousy of the boy who had been able to render so great a service to his young mistress.

"He hasn't learned them so very well," laughed Nancy, "but he does love to use them, and we can always guess what he means when he puts in a word that belongs in quite another place."

"He's never looked at me, yet," remarked Desdemona as Nancy opened the envelope addressed to her in Marguerite's handwriting, "but he'll have to, some day, because his mother likes me. She told me she 'hadn't nearly finished fotchng him up' yet," and Desdemona imitated Aunt Sylvia's tone and expression so perfectly that her listeners laughed.

"You've got her down fine," said Glenn. "I guess you'd be a good one for a minstrel show, Mona."

"I shall never do anything of that sort," and Desdemona's chin took its highest elevation. "I shall never have any publicity except what comes from my art—and I don't believe there'll be much of that," she added

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with one of her sudden falls to humility. "What does Marguerite say, Nancy?"

"She says that Roger's sore throat is almost well," said Nancy, "and that they are all coming up a week from yesterday. 'A week from to-day you'll see us all, and what is better ——' Oh, that sounds too complimentary to read," and Nancy's cheeks took on a deeper pink.

"I know what she said," remarked Desdemona; "she said, 'and what is better, we shall see you'—and then some very affectionate words."

"I bet you're right, I mean, probably you are," said Glenn. "That's all my bets ever mean, Nancy. I never had anything to bet with; I told the Admiral that, and the General, and they said 'all right,' or something like that. They understand first-rate for such old folks."

"You—you won't ever let grandfather see that you think he's old, will you, Glenn?" asked Nancy. "Of course he knows he is, but he doesn't like it."

"Doesn't he?" and the boy looked puzzled. "I wonder why. All right, I'll be careful. Say, it seems good to think all those Comptons are coming. They're the right kind. I wish Malcolm was coming, too."

"Yes, so do I," said Desdemona, "but of course when they found the camp plan was broken up on account of

that man's being sick, and Malcolm had the splendid chance to go off with his professor, it was too good to lose, wasn't it, Nancy?"

"Yes," said Nancy, "and beside, General and Mrs. Compton both think it will be a good thing for Malcolm and Ted to be separated for a while. They think Ted admires Malcolm so much and tries to copy him so that he doesn't do half he might on his own responsibility. And when Ted finds out about the camp here ——"

Nancy stopped and put her hand over her lips.

"I must let grandfather tell you about that," she said. "I mustn't take the pleasure away from him. He means to tell you while we're drinking tea. I won't keep him waiting any longer, either, for sometimes he gets a little impatient."

Desdemona stole a cautious glance at Nancy, and then past her friend in an endeavor to meet Glenn's eye; but Nancy was serenely folding Marguerite's letter, and the boy's gaze was fixed on a rose-bush toward which they were walking. It was rather a stubborn and loyal gaze, Desdemona decided, and she smiled to herself, while she respected Glenn for it. She knew that in his heart the boy could not help agreeing with her in her opinion that "little" was not the word most people would have applied to the Admiral's impatience.

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"But Nancy's so used to it, I suppose it really seems little to her," thought Desdemona. "It's lucky for Admiral Beaumont he has that sweet thing for a granddaughter instead of me! Well, he'd have a good deal more to put up with if he had Marguerite Compton. I'm not the only girl that likes to speak up, if I have red hair; Marguerite feels just as I do," and Desdemona nodded so vigorously that Nancy laughed.

"Are you having one of your conversations with yourself, Mona?" she asked. "It must be a very interesting one."

"It is, to me," said Desdemona, with a little quirk in her smile, "but you wouldn't care for it, specially. You haven't opened your letter from your brother, Nancy. How can you wait, when you're so crazy to know about his coming home?"

"Oh, I like to wait sometimes, to make things seem all the better," said Nancy demurely, but underneath her words lay the fact that she liked best to open Jack's letters when she was with her grandfather, or sometimes, quite alone.

Desdemona knew this, as well as if Nancy had said it, and she hastened her steps to match her friend's hurrying feet as they neared the house.

"I can't go any faster," panted the boy, "and you

wouldn't want to get there before me, would you, Nancy? Say, have I got to drink tea?"

His face wore a look of such dismay at the idea that his two friends laughed outright.

"No indeed, you haven't, if you don't like it," said Nancy merrily. "And I'm sorry I forgot, and hurried so, Glenn. Am I walking slowly enough now?"

"Oh, yes," said the boy, "and you just wait till I've been here a few weeks; you won't have to walk slow or wait for me, then! But look here, was there ever a boy that *liked* tea?"

"Why, I don't know ——" said Nancy, slowly, and then she laughed again. "We've never had a boy at a tea-drinking before; you're the very first. Once or twice the Compton boys have come in at about that time, but they always had to hurry off."

Glenn nodded, and gave Nancy the benefit of a wide, appreciative smile as they reached the piazza steps.

"I'll bet they did," he said. "They are pretty smart boys, those Comptons."

"Well, well, my dear," said the Admiral as Nancy reached his side, Desdemona and Glenn pausing on the top step to wait for Mr. Sigourney who came hurrying from the direction of the kitchen, "I had begun to think it was about time for our tea. Our friend Mrs.

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Sigourney must be feeling the need of it at this hour. Will you see that Betty brings a sufficient supply of everything, my dear? She may be a little out of practice, as a result of her stay with Mrs. Carter, where her duties were quite different. Six cups will be required this afternoon, you see."

"Grandfather," said Nancy, in her most coaxing tone, "it is such a warm afternoon I thought perhaps as we have been taking a walk we might have some of Aunt Sylvia's lemonade, we three, instead of tea, after I had poured for you and Mrs. Sigourney and Mr. Sigourney—unless he would prefer lemonade, too."

She looked at the artist and he saw a suggestion of appeal for help in her eyes. Nancy knew that whatever Mr. Sigourney approved would seem desirable to her grandfather.

"I feel as if lemonade would make me not only cool, but young again," said the artist, "and I desire it above all things. Aunt Sylvia has been making me feel very old, Admiral Beaumont, obliging me to remember things that happened a hundred years or so ago. If you and my lady mother would permit me to return to childhood for a brief period I should be most grateful."

"Have your way, young man," said the Admiral

with an amused chuckle, while his mother smiled at him indulgently and murmured, "Foolish boy!" and Nancy thanked him with her eyes.

When the lemonade had been served to her two little friends and the grown-up one, however, Nancy sipped hers slowly and watched her grandfather's face.

"Let us drink a toast to each other, madam," said the Admiral, looking at his white-haired guest with a rather wistful smile.

"Please, grandfather—and Mrs. Sigourney, please wait just a minute until I have filled my cup," said Nancy's soft voice, speaking hurriedly, as she laid her little hand on the Admiral's arm. "I find—the lemonade is very good, grandfather, but I miss my tea. Please let me join in the toast, grandfather. I'll be very quick!"

The Admiral looked at her, then turned to Mrs. Sigourney with a brightening face.

"You see," he said, and he could not keep the gratification and pride from creeping into his old voice, "little Nancy is a Beaumont; she holds to the old customs. Don't hurry, my dear; Mrs. Sigourney and I will gladly wait for you to join us. A cup of tea cannot be made in haste. And it was a graceful thing,

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my dear, for you to deny yourself first, to take what you knew would please your young guests. Your grandmother would have been glad to see that—very glad!”

CHAPTER IV

SUMMER PLANS

WHEN the tea-drinking was over, Nancy was called upon to read her grandfather's letters.

"It would perhaps be well for you to run through them first to yourself, before you read them aloud, my dear," said the Admiral. "There can be nothing in them which our good friends might not hear, but there may be in your brother's letters certain personal matters which would be of no interest save to us."

"Doesn't he talk exactly like the old fellers in Sir Walter Scott's books?" whispered Glenn to Desdemona as they sat side by side on the piazza, shielded from the Admiral's direct gaze by Nancy, but watching and listening with great respect. "Did you ever suppose they talked like that in real life?"

"Mr. Sigourney says that Admiral Beaumont is the most wonderful relic of an aristocratic and high-born past he ever witnessed," Desdemona whispered in return. "I try to remember every word he says on that account. S-sh, Nancy has moved, and he can see our faces now."

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There were evidently no secrets in either of Jack's letters for Nancy read them both without one of the pauses which always show the listener where a paragraph or more has been hastily omitted, or altered to make it safe. They were written in the way which always pleased and amused Nancy and her grandfather, as Jack well knew; one letter was a continuation of the other, so that no bit of news was repeated. There was only one special bit of news in the two letters that day, and it spread from the Admiral's letter over into Nancy's, causing the old face and the young one to look their best and happiest. For Jack was surely coming home for the summer.

"He's worked hard enough," said the Admiral to the company, tapping the arm of his chair with the precious letter; "he has shown wonderful persistence and ability; characteristics of his race, to be sure, but not wholly indigenous to his temperament."

Desdemona's lips moved silently. Indigenous was a new and most remarkable word, and must be annexed to her rapidly increasing vocabulary as soon as she could search out its meaning in the dictionary or find some friend who knew it.

"He stated in his last letter that he had entered into negotiations with a view to doing some tutoring this

summer," continued the Admiral, "but I am glad to know his plans in that direction have not matured."

Desdemona's forehead was wrinkled with the intensity of her endeavor to remember everything she heard. Glenn sat staring at the Admiral with wide eyes.

"And he's coming with the Comptons and the young man who is to have charge of Ted and Roger and—oh, grandfather, please tell them the rest, for I've almost told it by mistake!" pleaded Nancy.

"The 'rest,' as Nancy calls it, concerns a plan which the General has conceived and which the young man will assist him to execute," said the Admiral. "My old friend proposes to establish in the pine grove by the river a camp, for the months of July and August and a portion of September."

"'Portion,'" breathed Desdemona to Glenn. "Now any one else would have said 'part.' I must remember that; it's such *elegant* language."

"In this camp," pursued the Admiral after a suitable pause, "my friend General Compton will have a tent which will be occupied by him and his youngest son, Richard. The boy begged earnestly for this privilege, and although he is of tender years, his father has decided to grant it, as his mother will always be within reach in this house."

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"Why, that little Dick is only a baby!" cried Desdemona, startled out of her respectful silence.

"The child of a military commander could scarcely be called that, even at the age of six," said the Admiral in his most stately manner, and Desdemona, silenced though unconvinced, leaned back in her chair.

"Roger will share the tent of the young man, whose name the General neglected to mention in his letter," continued the Admiral, "and he thought that you, my boy," turning to Glenn, "would enjoy sharing a tent with Theodore, usually called Ted."

Glenn's cheeks flushed and his eyes shone.

"Indeed I should, sir," he answered. "You can just b ——"

He stopped short, and the Admiral chuckled appreciatively.

"I know what you were about to add, and I'm glad of it, Glenn," he said. "By the way, Mr. Sigourney, don't you think our new name for our little friend is a great improvement on the old one?"

Mr. Sigourney had been asked this question twice before during the afternoon by the Admiral, who was growing forgetful of many things, but on neither of the previous occasions had the big eyes of Patrick Glenn

Donovan been fastened on his face. This was evidently a situation which called for tact.

“Admiral Beaumont,” and the artist bowed before his host, “any name spoken as you and my friend Nancy speak it is so full of music to my ears that I should be quite at a loss if I were asked to set one above another. But I will say, if I may be pardoned a very commonplace pun, that ‘Glenn’ seems a particularly appropriate name for a boy spending the summer at Beaumont Corners. I only wish my own might be changed to ‘Dale’ or ‘Brook’ for the time being.”

“Ah!” said the Admiral, turning to Mrs. Sigourney, “your son has a graceful way of avoiding direct issues, madam,” and he smiled at the artist. “Nancy, do you suppose Jack would like to be in a tent, rather than in the house? He is a great lover of outdoor life, my dear, you remember.”

“Yes, grandfather,” said Nancy slowly. “Perhaps he would like it best. He’ll tell us when he comes; there is a tent, you know, out in the barn.”

“Well, well, there will be time enough to decide, when he comes,” said the Admiral. “I forgot to mention, friends, that General Compton has engaged the services of a Mrs. Siren Dole—outrageous name, but a worthy woman, I understand, known to Aunt Sylvia—

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to cook for the camp. She will have a tent for dining purposes and a small stove, but she will occupy a room here and go to the camp in the morning, returning when her work for the day is over. A most satisfactory arrangement, I have no doubt. I shall not be able to visit the camp often, although it is but a few minutes' walk from the house, but the campers will be back and forth, of course—back and forth! It will be very pleasant.”

The Admiral smiled to himself as he looked down the slope to the orchard path, which led abruptly to the left at one turning and out into a broad meadow beyond the wall of which was the edge of the grove of pines. He sat there, still smiling, when Nancy returned after saying good-bye to her friends. Glenn sat there, too, quite close to the Admiral, his big eyes raised to the clouds he never tired of watching. He had not spoken a word to the Admiral for fear of interrupting his thoughts, and indeed the boy himself had plenty to think of, without talking. The Admiral began to nod.

Nancy seated herself on the top step of the piazza, and she, too, raised her eyes to the clouds. The boy left his chair and went to sit beside her on the step.

“Say, Nancy, won't your brother Jack go to the



“HE WILL LIKE THE THINGS YOU DO”

camp every day, even if he doesn't stay there?" asked Glenn. "I liked him first-rate, those times I saw him, and I thought—I thought there'd be lots of things he could tell me about, things I could do that would please your grandfather—of course he'd know exactly."

Nancy hesitated for a minute. With all her love for her brother and loyalty to him, she could not help knowing that there were many things to which Jack had given much more time and attention than finding out "exactly" what would most please his grandfather. But now Jack was doing his best, and—yes, there was surely one thing she could say.

"I think Jack could tell you ever so much, and he will, Glenn," said Nancy, gently, "but there is one thing perhaps he would not realize. Grandfather likes the things Jack does, because he is Jack, and he will like the things you do, Glenn, because you are Glenn, and he likes *you*. Grandfather talks sometimes a little bit as if he thought every one ought to follow the same pattern, but really what he likes best of all, I think, is for people to be just themselves; he likes originality, Glenn, though I think he doesn't quite know it."

"My, but that would make things easy," said the boy. "It's going to be pretty tough work for me to be like anybody else, Nancy, no matter how hard I

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try. You see everything has been different for me, ever since I was born, than for any of these other boys the Admiral knows. What do you suppose the tutor's like?"

"I haven't the least bit of an idea," said Nancy thoughtfully. "Mrs. Compton and the General wrote very hurried letters when they told us about him. Mrs. Compton only said she felt sure we would like him, and that they had just secured him the day she wrote, and the General said, 'He's the one I'd have chosen out of a hundred;' so I know they are pleased."

"Why wouldn't your brother have been a good one?" asked Glenn abruptly. "I think he'd have been the best ever."

Nancy caught her lip between her teeth.

"Oh, Glenn," she whispered, "we mustn't ever say that, out loud. I had thought of it, too! Perhaps if Jack hadn't been thinking of his other plan—to go out West with that rich, very stupid boy, to try to make him learn something—perhaps if he'd given that plan up sooner, he might have been the one. Let's not *breathe* it again, ever! I only hope grandfather hasn't thought of it. We must be very careful what we say. Because, of course, grandfather thinks there never was anybody like Jack!"

"You can bet on me—I mean you can be sure I won't let out any of my thoughts," whispered Glenn.

"But say, Nancy, isn't it queer the way things get mixed up? Now here's a camp and ——"

"S-sh," said Nancy, for the Admiral stirred in his chair and spoke.

"It will be a very pleasant time, my dear," he murmured. "You have said good-bye to your friends, Nancy?"

CHAPTER V

A DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE

THE next week flew by as summer weeks are sure to fly for girls and boys. Nancy's days were filled with happy things, like walks and talks with Glenn and Desdemona; hours with dear Aunt Sylvia and Betty, in which they set the big old house in the best possible order for the guests who were to come, with many special touches for Marguerite's and Jack's rooms and for Mrs. Compton's "suite"; quiet hours when she read to her grandfather and wrote his letters, for the Admiral's fingers had not quite regained their flexibility and strength. Best of all, there were the times when Nancy flew along the country roads on Jessie's back, her mind and heart full of dreams and plans.

"Oh, Jessie, isn't it good to be in the country, where there's nothing for you to be afraid of?" Nancy said every day to her beloved mare. "You and I are happiest in the country, aren't we, dear? in spite of all the wonderful things there are in the city. We're not sorry we went, oh, no! but how glad we are to be home again!"

There was no doubt as to Jessie's gladness; it showed in her every motion, the lift of her graceful head and the look in her beautiful, unfrightened eyes. The city had no charms for her.

The days were a series of delightful dreams to Patrick Glenn Donovan, and his sensitive Irish face showed his surprise and pleasure at every turn.

"I can't believe it's me, sir," he said to the Admiral, who smiled down at him and let his lapse from grammar pass unnoticed for once. "I keep pinching myself to see if 't isn't a mistake—pinching and pinching. And then I keep thinking about all the little kids in the hospital and down where I used to live, and all the newsboys I know, and thinking what a lot I'll have to tell 'em when fall comes. Say, Admiral, I wish you knew some o' my friends; you'd like 'em; there's half a dozen of the newsboys I know best that you'd take to, right off; I'm 'most sure you would."

"I haven't a doubt there are some very fine boys among them," said the Admiral, who was in his most lenient and broad-minded mood. "I feel sure you would never choose for a friend a boy who had not many sterling qualities—such as honesty, generosity and truthfulness," he added by way of explanation, for

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Glenn looked doubtful as to what "sterling qualities" might be.

The boy hesitated for a moment. He was sitting, as he liked to sit, on the top step of the piazza, having drawn the Admiral's chair well forward so that they could talk together with ease. Glenn's thin little hands were clasped behind his head and he leaned against one of the white fluted pillars of the piazza, his eyes looking straight up into the Admiral's.

"Sometimes a boy hasn't had a fair chance at those—those sterling qualities, Admiral," he said slowly. "Sometimes he comes of folks that aren't honest and they don't encourage him to be; and sometimes if he isn't truthful he can skip a lot of knocking around and worse that he'd get at home; and sometimes he hasn't a thing in the world to be generous with, don't you see? But you can't see, of course, because you never ran up against any boys like 'em. Say, Admiral, you weren't ever *hungry*, were you? I mean hungry so you didn't dare to look in at the bakery windows, or stop near a fruit-stand? And were you ever cold—so cold you didn't feel any thicker'n paper?"

"Bless my heart, no," said the Admiral, and reach-

ing down he patted the boy's shoulder with his old hand. "No, I never was any of those things. I've no right to judge, boy. I've no right to judge!"

The big Irish eyes brightened and Glenn's wide smile flashed out at the Admiral.

"I guess I sound as if I was trying to preach to you, sir," he said, "and I wasn't; I was just thinking out loud. But when you're cold and hungry and get kicked around all the time, truthfulness and honesty and generosity—why, they seem like just words, Admiral, that's all—just words! You can't get any meaning to 'em in your head—because your head's too light and empty, that's why."

"But *you* held to them through everything," said the Admiral after a moment's silence. "Nobody could ever make me believe you forgot the meaning of them, my boy."

"I had good friends," said Glenn coloring under the steady gaze, through his eyes were clear and shiny. "I was mighty lucky, sir. Mrs. Leahy, and Terry Dolan, and Father Leclerc—I had a lot of good friends, and they kept track of me."

"I wonder why," mused the Admiral; "how did it happen you made such good friends?"

"I don't know," and the boy shook his head, "except

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I was little and kind of alone, and I liked folks—I've always liked 'em—all kinds."

"Ah!" said the Admiral, "that may partly account for it. You've 'always liked folks'—a valuable asset in your chosen profession, my boy; a valuable asset," and the Admiral fell to musing again, while Glenn sat very still, turning his head so that his eyes saw the lovely slope of meadows with the purple hills beyond.

For Desdemona, at the Sigourneys' bungalow, out in the road, down by the brook, up in the morning before the dew was off the grass, lingering long after supper time to watch the sunset glow fade from the sky and to see the stars come out, sketching and studying colors and shadows all day long, while her face rounded with happiness—for Desdemona the week seemed no longer than a city day.

When it had flown by and the morning came of the day on which the Comptons, the new tutor and Jack were to arrive, Aunt Sylvia, Betty and Sylvanus were up at dawn. Although it seemed as if there could be nothing left to scrub or set in order, Aunt Sylvia found plenty of work for both her son and Betty.

"I feel's if somet'ing *special* was gwine to come to pass to-day, honey," she said to Nancy when breakfast

time had come and she was making ready to leave Betty in charge of the meal.

"Something specially nice, I hope, Aunt Sylvia," said Nancy.

"I reckon so, my lamb," said the old mammy cheerfully. "I don' hab no presentings ob evil, nor my bones don' feel shivery. Some good news is coming dis-a-way, I's pretty certain."

When Nancy stood waiting on the platform at the Potterville station, she smiled, remembering Aunt Sylvia's prophecy.

"It's good enough news for me to know Jack is on the train with all the others," Nancy told herself. "There, it's coming! it's coming!"

She watched eagerly for the first familiar face. It was Marguerite's, of course. In spite of the brakeman's detaining hand, she jumped off the car and flung herself on Nancy before the train had fairly stopped. Tumbling down as fast as they could behind her, came Ted, Roger and Dick. They shook hands with Nancy with great vigor, and then lined up beside her, their eyes fixed on the car, their faces filled with the light of anticipation.

Then Nancy stepped forward to greet Mrs. Compton and the General, but even while she told them how

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glad she was to see them her eyes wandered beyond them to her brother.

"How's the dearest little sister in the world?" asked Jack and he stooped to kiss her while she clung to him and patted his sleeve.

She turned, holding tightly to his hand, to welcome the tutor whom for a moment she had forgotten.

"Why, where is the young man?" she asked, bewildered by the many pairs of eyes fastened on her face.

There was a moment's silence, while they all looked at her smilingly; then Ted gave an irrepressible laugh. He tried to smother it, but Nancy, looking up at Jack as she felt his fingers tighten on hers, suddenly understood—for Jack's free hand was extended before him with the index finger pointing inward to a spot in about the center of his broad chest.

"Right this way, Nancy," he said gently. "I'm the young man! Are you disappointed not to see some one else?"

But Nancy's delight was too evident for it to be necessary for her to put it in words. Her cheeks grew as pink as the pinkest rose in the garden at Beaumont Corners, but all she said was "Oh! oh!! oh!!!"

"Our surprise is a perfect success, I see," said the General. "Well, Nancy, if you're half as pleased as

I am, you're pretty well satisfied. How do you think your grandfather will feel, eh?"

"Oh," said Nancy drawing a long breath, "I think grandfather will feel that it is the most splendid thing that could possibly have happened, General Compton—but I don't know as he will *say* very much; you know grandfather feels things way inside, down deep, and they don't always come out when you'd expect they would!"

"That's as true as anything you ever said, little girl," and the General chuckled. "I've had fifty odd years' acquaintance with your grandfather, and I couldn't have put the case any better myself."

He chuckled again when Jack explained matters to the Admiral on the piazza at Beaumont Corners, while the others stood watching to see what the old man would do, and hear what he had to say. But the Admiral did very little and said less. He laid his hand on Jack's shoulder and looked at him for a moment in silence, then:

"Well, my lad, I hope my friend will have no occasion to regret his choice," said the Admiral. "I wish," and the old eyes softened as they searched the handsome young face, "I wish I were able to be of some use myself in your camp."

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But at that Nancy stole to his side and slipped her hand through his arm.

“Grandfather,” she said reproachfully, “don’t you realize that if you went to that camp there wouldn’t be one gentleman left in the house? Mrs. Compton and Marguerite and I would be all sole alone.”

“Sure enough,” said the old man, and he straightened himself and smiled. “A squire of dames, that is my part, in these days—and a very pleasant part it is,” said the Admiral, bowing to Mrs. Compton and Marguerite, with Nancy on his arm.

CHAPTER VI

CAMP WIND-AWAY

THE preparations for camp began the very next day. Some clearing had to be done in the pine grove, and all the boys set to work to help with right good will. Even little Dick made himself useful by carrying armfuls of pine boughs so long that his sturdy little figure was quite hidden as he trudged back and forth between the wood-trimmers, and the brush-heap at the water's edge.

Before night the work of clearing was all done and next morning the tents were set up and furnished.

"Now for a name," said Jack. "What shall we call it, General Compton?"

"I leave that to the young ladies," and the General looked at Nancy and Marguerite, who were standing, arms entwined, gazing at the white tents gleaming among the pines, in the morning sunshine.

The two little girls had a private consultation; then Marguerite spoke.

"Nancy and I have thought of something we think

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would be a beautiful name," she said, "but perhaps you won't. Let's say it together, Nancy."

"Camp Wind-Away," chanted the friends, watching eagerly for expressions of approval on the faces of the campers.

"Because, you see, the river winds away up and down-stream," explained Nancy, "and over on the other side the hill road winds away up toward the sky, and here in the woods so many little paths wind away through the trees."

"A capital name for it," said the General heartily. "All who are of that opinion signify it in the usual way. Contrary minded—I thought so, there are no contrary minded persons. Ladies, in behalf of the new Camp Wind-Away, I thank you for a most felicitous choice."

"Do you like the name, Glenn?" Marguerite asked the boy a few moments later as she stood beside him looking out on the river where there now were two rowboats as well as Jack Beaumont's canoe. "I thought you came near saying something when we told it, and then you shut your mouth tight. I saw you."

"I like it first-rate," said Glenn, decidedly. "I was only going to say it sounded like Nancy, because she's

always making pictures of things; but perhaps you are, too, and it wouldn't have been polite, I guess, anyway. I shut my mouth just in time. You see I don't know you as well as I know Nancy."

"I'm very different," said Marguerite seriously; "I don't suppose there could be two persons much more unlike than Nancy and I. Sometimes I think there isn't a great deal to understand about me, Glenn, and then again I feel very *deep*. Do you know that feeling? Deep and sort of lonesome as if nobody knew your innermost thoughts; but it never lasts very long with me."

"I wouldn't let it," said Glenn in a practical tone that impressed Marguerite. "I'd light out and do something for somebody quick, when I felt that way. If you don't you'll get grouchy."

"You have a great deal of common sense," remarked Marguerite thoughtfully. "That's what I generally mean to do. Isn't that boat pretty? Oh, see the name! *The Nancy!* I hadn't thought about their being named! Nancy, see your namesake!"

"Come here, where you can see the name on the other boat," said Nancy who stood a little distance away from Marguerite and Glenn. "Marguerite seems to me about as pretty a name as a boat could have."

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"I feel like the girls you read about in the newspaper who preside at the launching of steamships," said Marguerite. "I don't think preside is just the word I ought to have used, but I mean they are very important. Nancy, this is one of the most important moments of my life. Nothing was ever named for me before except a Maltese kitten, and it lived only six weeks."

"What is this sad tale of a short life?" asked Jack's laughing voice as he came up behind Nancy and threw his arm over her shoulders. "Am I expected to shed tears thus early?"

"No, indeed," said Marguerite, who considered Nancy's brother a very brilliant young man, although she thought, on principle, that all boys, big and little, needed "taking down" now and then; "no, indeed, it's something you'd be much more likely to laugh at. I mentioned the death of a kitten that one of my friends had named for me," and Marguerite lifted her chin.

"How can she think I would laugh about the death of a kitten, Nancy?" demanded Jack of his sister, gently shaking her shoulders. "Can't you tell her how fond I am of little cats? Doesn't Julia Frost love me next best to you?"

Marguerite tried to look dignified, but she did not

succeed very well, and after a moment she broke into a laugh in which they all joined.

“I’ll tell you what *is* a pretty serious matter,” said Jack in a confidential tone to the three children. “I shouldn’t wish on any account to cast any reflections on Mrs. Dole, for she was General Compton’s choice, but I tell you three privately that I’m shaking in my shoes at the thought that in three short hours—yes, it is nearly noon—in three short hours, our fate as a camp will be decided. If Mrs. Dole casts a disapproving eye on our simple preparations for life among the pines, and especially the dining-tent, I don’t know what will become of us. We can’t study, swim, row, fish and walk without food—you three know that as well as I do.”

Nancy and Glenn, who had never seen Mrs. Dole, laughed, but Marguerite’s face wore a thoughtful expression.

“She’s a very notional person,” she said slowly, “and she isn’t so very fond of walking; she told father that; she says her feet ‘feel’s if dey was all knuckles’ when she’s walked a little way. That would be the only trouble. She told me she loved to see tents, and expected to feel as if she were living ‘right in de camp-meetin’ all de time.’ Anyway I don’t see how she can

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possibly call the walk from the house down here long."

"No, she couldn't, I think," said Nancy, "but at night, Marguerite, her feet would be tired, and it's uphill, going back. Oh, I do hope she won't mind it."

"Father told her it was 'just a step,'" said Marguerite, "and he really thinks that's all it is. Here comes father now, with the boys trailing at his heels. They fall all over each other seeing which can keep closest to him. Father, we're just talking about your Mrs. Dole, and wondering if she'll mind the walk."

The General smiled, and glanced at Jack with raised eyebrows. Jack nodded.

"I would, sir," he said, while the children stared in bewilderment at this mysterious exchange of ideas. "It's a good time, I think."

"Not too soon?" inquired the General, enjoying his little byplay. "It hasn't come, you know."

"But to-morrow is not far away," said Jack.

"Oh, father, tell us!" cried Marguerite. "Please tell us!"

"Very well," said the General, "I yield to the advice of Captain Jack. There is now on its way here—what do you suppose is on its way here, Nancy and Marguerite?"

"Father! we can't guess!" and his small daughter clutched his arm. "With all the things that might be coming, *don't* make us guess! Well, I'll guess one thing, just to hurry you. I guess a Polar bear. Guess, Nancy, quick!"

"I guess a rhinoceros," said Nancy, thus adjured. "That's all I can think of, in a hurry, General Compton."

"I don't consider that you are playing fair, young ladies," said the General in his most military tone, while Glenn watched him with his wide smile, and the Compton boys stood with their eyes fixed on their father's face, "but I will be generous. There is now on its way here a—portable—house."

"A what!" cried Nancy and Marguerite, and the three Compton boys in chorus.

But Glenn's smile widened and his eyes sparkled in his thin little face.

"I've seen 'em," he said, as he caught the General's glance. "At a fair once they had some, and I looked 'em all over. They're great!"

"What are they like, and what is one coming here for?" demanded Marguerite. "Father, if you were in a battle, you'd never be so slow about firing! If you had been, you'd never have got beyond being a private!"

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And here are Nancy and I, just dancing with impatience! Well, of course I'm the only one that's hopping up and down, father, but just look at Nancy's eyes!"

The General looked, as he was bidden, and smiled at Nancy.

"Her eyes are rather on the dancing order, I'll admit," he said. "The portable house is to be set up in the pines, not far from Camp Wind-Away—in fact, just in that clearing you see at the end of the right hand path."

"There! I wondered why you spent so much pains over that," said Marguerite.

"It has three rooms," said the General in response to Nancy's eager, questioning eyes. "One pretty good sized and two smaller ones. With it is also coming a little oil-stove of a new, highly approved pattern. My idea was that the largest room would be a sort of play-housekeeping room for two little girls I know, to which they would perhaps occasionally ask a friend or two; and the smaller rooms would serve for bedrooms, one for Mrs. Dole's constant use, the other for the two little girls if some moonlight night they were invited and allowed to stay in the woods."

"Father, you certainly are the dearest thing that ever was!" cried Marguerite, as she fell upon the

General, and hugged him. "Did you think of it all yourself, or did mother help?"

"Your mother always helps," said the General, "but in this case I really was the one who thought of it first. Look out now, don't smother me!"

Marguerite left her father and flew to Nancy.

"We'll make Mrs. Dole teach us how to do all sorts of things, Nancy dear," she said, swinging her friend's hand. "And we can give parties; small ones, of course, and sit there to mend the clothes. Oh, Nancy, I shall have a great deal more to mend than you! Do you suppose you'd help me with the holes in Roger's stockings? I've heard mother say they're perfectly awful, and I'm not a very good darner."

"I'll do all the darning, Marguerite, if you'll read to me while I'm doing it," said Nancy, and Marguerite made the promise joyfully.

When they had gone back to the house for dinner, and Nancy was brushing her hair in her room, Aunt Sylvia came in the door with a basket of clean clothes which she proceeded to fold and put away in Nancy's bureau. Her face wore a very solemn expression, and she gave several heavy sighs.

"Please, what is the matter, Aunt Sylvia?" begged Nancy, detaining her old mammy as she started to

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leave the room. "Has anything gone wrong? After dinner I want to have a long talk with you, before Mrs. Dole comes, and tell you of the lovely surprise General Compton has planned for Marguerite and me."

"You mean dat take-to-pieces house I jes' heerd about from Roger Compton?" inquired Aunt Sylvia gloomily. "Dat house whar you's gwine spend all yo' time from mornin' till night, an' dat Dole pusson along dere wid you and Miss Marg'rite? I's heerd all 'bout it, honey. Well, I reckon de Admiral and Mis' Gen'l Compton will hab some mighty lonesome times, dat's what I reckon. Don' make much diff'ence when a pusson gets to be mos' a hundred, same as I am, den you 'spects to hab eberyting pass by an' leave you 'lone; but Mis' Gen'l Compton ain' so ole, and ——"

"Oh, dear Aunt Sylvia, stop! stop!" cried Nancy, between laughing and crying, for she always took her old mammy's jealous twinges greatly to heart. "Why, we're only going down there for play, just as we go out in the garden; and you'll have to help us; and Mrs. Compton will go every day, of course; and there will always be some one of us here so grandfather won't be lonely. And one of the things I pictured in my mind was that you'd sit there with your work, under the pines, often, while we were playing."

“M-m,” said Aunt Sylvia, her face breaking into smiles, her hands raising the empty clothes-basket to her head and balancing it there. “M-m.”

She folded her arms and, head erect, marched through the door.

“Mebbe Mr. Sigourney like to make anudder picture-po'trait o' me out in de wood,” she said gaily. “I'm 'spectin' he may, fo' Mis' Gen'l Compton say she like firs'-rate to hab one. We'll see. M-m.”

CHAPTER VII

AN OLD STORY

No greater contrast to Aunt Sylvia could well have been imagined in a woman of her own race than that presented by Mrs. Dole. When she arrived with Sylvanus the Admiral gave one look at her and sank back in his chair.

"Bless my heart! What's the matter with the woman?" he demanded before the newcomer, convoyed by Aunt Sylvia, had passed beyond hearing. "Has she lost all her relatives and friends? What's the meaning of that great black bonnet, and that funereal shawl?"

Sylvanus, who stood grinning at the foot of the steps waiting for some commission from Nancy, seemed to think the Admiral's question was addressed to him.

"She's had a superfluity of bereavements, Admiral," he explained, "and she has a great accumulating of mourning garments, she told me, and this summer would be a most adventitious time to wear some of them out, for she is looking toward further matrimony next October, Admiral."

“Is she?” and the Admiral’s tone expressed the greatest and most unflattering wonder. “Well, well! I pity the man. Her expression matches her clothes.”

It proved, however, that Mrs. Dole’s expression was a mere overlay, like her garments. She was really possessed of a cheerful and determined spirit, and she and Aunt Sylvia were heard laughing together within a very few minutes. At the end of an hour when Aunt Sylvia had given her an excellent dinner and a great deal of advice, Mrs. Dole presented herself before Mrs. Compton with the announcement :

“Now, I’s ready, Mis’ Gen’ral, to go see dat camp. I’s been told I’s gwine to stay dar, in some kind ob a house, an’ I likes to see it right away, so if I ’cides it’s too lonesome, I kin kite back whar I come from, an’ you kin secure somebody else.”

“Oh, I’m sure you won’t think it’s lonesome at all, Mrs. Dole,” said Mrs. Compton. “We will walk down to the camp with you now. Come, Marguerite, find Nancy and ask if she’s ready to go with us.”

Nancy was reading to her grandfather who was beginning to fall asleep, but she shook her head at Marguerite who made signs to her from the doorway.

“By and by,” Nancy’s lips formed silently over the top of the newspaper, as she rattled its pages to gain a

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moment's time, without rousing her grandfather ; until he was very sound asleep he always waked if the stillness came which showed that Nancy thought her task was over.

All the rest of the children were down at the camp with Jack Beaumont while the General was taking a walk along the river's edge, selecting likely spots for a fisherman to pass a pleasant hour if he were not in any haste to catch fish. The brook which tumbled along at one side of the pine grove was the place to catch trout, the General knew, but it did not offer such tempting banks ; its low growing trees and shrubs were not designed to accommodate fishermen of the General's build.

Aunt Sylvia put her arm through Mrs. Dole's as the party entered the woods, and held it tightly there as they went along the pretty winding path, and at last came out to the big clearing.

"Now I's gwine say a few words, Siren Dole, 'fore you speak up an' say anyt'ing you'll be sorry 'bout, when it's too late," said Aunt Sylvia. "I's gwine tell you dat dis is de bes' located spot fo' tenting, an' dese are de bes' made an' mos' expensive tents dar is on de market, an' de folkses dat's gwine be in 'em is de fines' quality in de land, an' de opp'tunity ob de privileges

to wait on sech folkses an' cook fo' dere appetites an' wash dere clothes, is one dat you won't find anywhar else in de whole worl'; an'—an' co'se if you don' act right, dey will be jess nachelly 'bleeged to hand de opp'tunity ob de privileges to somebody else. Now, Siren Dole—is you got anyt'ing to say?"

Mrs. Dole's mouth opened in a smile which showed two rows of white teeth. She stood with her arms, one of which Aunt Sylvia still firmly clutched, folded on her breast; over her black gown she wore a black and white striped apron which had a deep ruffle at its lower edge, ruffles for shoulder straps, and voluminous strings. Her eyes roamed over the scene as she spoke.

"'Long as you's condescended to stop yo' boasting," she said in a soft, agreeable drawl, "I will make bold to tell Mis' Gen'ral dat I feel like I'd be at home hyah right from de first, an' I's all ready to take hold an' begin. If dose rolls o' cyarpet is gwine on de tent flo's, Mis' Gen'ral, shan't I beat 'em up a spell? I see a rattan beater over yonder."

She detached herself from Aunt Sylvia and darted over to the pieces of carpeting which she unrolled and proceeded to belabor with the beater until Mrs. Compton and Marguerite fled to the General's tent to escape

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the dust. Ted, Roger and Dick were all in there, tacking pictures on the canvas with little skill but great energy.

"Do you believe father'll want all those things to look at?" asked Marguerite, but her mother shook her head at her behind the boys' backs.

"I see you've selected battle scenes and pictures of horses," she said, as she walked around the tent. "You chose just what your father always speaks of in the magazines, I know."

"Yes, mother," said Roger, eagerly, "we did. We got all the warlike pictures we could find, and all the horses that looked as if they might have gone to war."

"Real spirited ones, he means, mother," said Ted who was struggling with a heavy pasteboard on which were mounted three grenadiers. "And I knew he'd like these soldiers. When this is all done we're going to put the pictures that are left in the other tents, but it doesn't matter so much about them, because none of the rest of us have ever been in the war, so we shan't miss the real surroundings, the way father will."

"I see," said Mrs. Compton with a nod of understanding.

"And he'll tell me stories about them all, mother, when I'm going to sleep," said Dick. "'Less I should

go to sleep before he's ready to come to bed," he added with a sudden remembrance that it was not the General who had told him stories at bedtime. "Shall you ever be down here, mother, 'bout the time when I'm going to sleep?"

"I shouldn't wonder a bit if I were here very often about that time," said Mrs. Compton, as she smiled down at the wistful little face raised to hers. "It's such a pleasant time to tell stories to a little boy about six years old."

"Then *that's* all right," and Dick gave his mother a bear's hug of gratitude. "Glenn went off with Jack, and I should think they'd be coming back by this time. They went to the spring to get a drink. Jack said Glenn must drink at the spring for an inish—an inishy-nation, mother, I think he said. He meant so Glenn would be like all the rest of us that have drunk that spring water," Dick explained, thinking his mother might not quite understand his very large word, so lately acquired.

"That's thoughtful of Jack," said Mrs. Compton. "I know you three will do all you can to make Glenn have a happy summer," and she looked with loving trust at her sons.

"'Course we will, mother," came in a strong chorus.

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Marguerite, who had been reconnoitering, now appeared again with the word that Nancy was coming along the path, for she had blown the little silver whistle which the General had given her, and which was exactly like one which hung from Marguerite's chain. The two friends used them for hailing each other from a distance and valued them highly. Desdemona's throat served her so well that she had no need of a whistle, though she admired Nancy's and Marguerite's very much, and tuned her own call to match the notes given by the little silvery ones.

When Nancy had been shown the picture gallery and had complimented Mrs. Dole on the freshened carpets, she asked where Jack and Glenn had gone.

"Let's take the path to the spring and find them," she suggested. "They must have stopped on the way. Oh, I wonder if Jack took his hatchet when they started. Did any of you notice?"

"Yes, I did," said Roger; "he took his hatchet, and he told me he might 'bring back many a sapling young.' I don't know whether that's a quotation; is it, Nancy?"

"I think not," laughed Nancy; "it's just what Aunt Sylvia calls 'fun talk.' But I shouldn't wonder one bit if Jack had taken Glenn to Pirates' Rock. I'd for-

gotten all about it, for it's so long since Jack and I have been there, and the woods have grown up around it."

"What is Pirates' Rock?" demanded the boys in chorus.

"Why, they called it that because when my grandfather was a little boy his grandfather used to tell him a story about a young man whom he—great-great-grandfather—knew years before grandfather was born. He was a relative of the people who used to live in a house near the place where the Sigourneys' bungalow stands, and he came from across the seas. Great-great-grandfather used to tell grandfather that the young man was very dark, with black curling hair, and black eyes and a very fiery temper; and he had been a good many voyages with his father, who was a sea-captain, but not an honest one, great-great-grandfather was sure, from what he heard people say, half under their breaths. They called him Pirate Kildare."

"I never heard anything more exciting," said Marguerite, as Nancy paused. "And was the young man a real pirate, afterward, like his father? It all sounds so old and like a story!"

"Oh, I'm not sure even that his father was one, Marguerite," said Nancy hastily; "it was only that people

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called him so, because they knew he was not kind, and not really honest, and they thought his money had come too fast, great-great-grandfather said. He stayed only one year in this country, and did some mysterious sort of business that nobody understood about, and then he sailed away, taking his son with him, and his relatives here never saw or heard of him again. But before he went away for good he came to Beaumont Corners, and his relatives brought him to call on great-great-grandfather, and he thanked him for being friendly to his son. For none of the other young men had liked young Foster Kildare—that was his name—so great-great-grandfather had been sorry for him and tried to make him feel at home. And Pirate Kildare had asked to be shown the rock which had been a favorite place where his son and great-great-grandfather had sat often, and talked together, and looked down the river, for in those days these trees were not as tall and thick as they are now, and you could see the river plainly.

“And Pirate Kildare said,”—Nancy could not help enjoying the knowledge that each and every member of her little audience was hanging on her words, as she made an impressive pause in the story she had heard so many times,—“Pirate Kildare said, ‘Call this Pirates’

Rock, young man! It would please me, and some day before long, you'll be glad you did it. Is it a bargain?" And he looked at great-great-grandfather with a smile, but not a pleasant one to see, grandfather has told me, for great-great-grandfather showed him *how* Pirate Kildare smiled, and grandfather showed me."

"Show us, Nancy, can't you?" begged Ted, but Nancy shook her head.

"I couldn't possibly," she said, "but probably Desdemona could, if grandfather showed her, for she can do such wonderful things with her face."

"Get him to show her, please, Nancy!" begged the boys, but Nancy laughed.

"I'm afraid perhaps grandfather doesn't quite remember the story now," she said; "he hasn't told it to me for a long time. But Jack and I used to go there and sit on the rock and wonder what Pirate Kildare meant by saying great-great-grandfather would be glad some day. Of course Jack was almost grown up and I was only a very little girl, but we talked about it. I used to think that perhaps some day we should find a buried treasure there, and I thought it would be gold pieces in leather bags, and flashing gems, like the treasure in fairy stories. But, although I had a little spade and dug all around, and tried to find the treasure, I

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never could. Jack didn't believe in it—he always laughed. Although ——”

“Oh, Nancy, ‘although’ what?” asked Marguerite eagerly. “Do finish.”

“Although some of the darkies always said, as long as they lived, that that night, after Pirate Kildare had been here, there were lanterns down in the woods near the rock,” said Nancy slowly, “and they never would go near the rock afterward, if they could help it, for they said there had been ‘pirate doings’ there. And the very day after, the rock was struck by lightning and a big piece of it was split from one side and wedged into the opening that great-great-grandfather and Foster Kildare had called the cave, so the darkies were more frightened than ever. They said the rock was—was cursed!”

“Of course Aunt Sylvia doesn't believe things like that,” said Roger, half inquiringly. “She's too sensible.”

“Dear Aunt Sylvia, of course she's very sensible,” said Nancy, “but—I haven't ever asked her if she believed that, Roger,” and she looked at him rather wistfully.

“'Course I won't ask her, Nancy,” said Roger loyally. “I think 'most everybody believes some

things that aren't so sensible as other things. Shan't we hurry up and start now, for fear we'll miss Jack and Glenn? You've been very interesting," he added handsomely. "And I don't see how you ever keep all your different sets of grandfathers straight in your head, Nancy, truly I don't!"

"Oh, I'm more used to stories about them than anything else," laughed Nancy, as they started along the path. "I could tell you about two more generations, still farther back, and not get them mixed—but I won't do it to-day, Roger!"

CHAPTER VIII

"CALM AND MODERATE"

NANCY led the way through the woods, winding in and out until at last they came to a place where it was evident that some one had lately used a hatchet; there were branches of shrubs freshly cut, lying on the ground, and at a little distance there were two bending figures, plainly to be seen through the leaves of some low-growing trees. This was at the edge of the wood near the river, and some maples had crept in among the pines.

"They're cutting a path up to the rock," whispered Nancy. "Let's all whistle together, and see how surprised they will be."

There arose on the air such a shrill sound, compounded of two silver whistles, and three sets of fingers placed close to boys' lips that the bent figures straightened suddenly and two laughing faces peered through the leaves.

"Turn sharp to your left and you'll find we've cleared a place," called Jack. "You've stolen a march on us, for Glenn and I meant to have the path open

down to the river, and then bring all of you here for a surprise."

"Has Glenn been using a hatchet, *really*, Jack?" asked Nancy. "I'm afraid he ought not to have touched it."

"He hasn't let me cut anything but easy little branches, nothing more than twigs, Nancy," said Glenn quickly; "and say, you mustn't forget I'm growing strong fast, and getting up muscle. I don't want to be a baby boy any longer than I have to."

"There's no fear of any one's mistaking you for a mollycoddle, Glenn," and Jack laid his hand on the boy's shoulder. "You go slowly for a little while, and before the summer's over Ted and I will have to be looking out for our laurels."

"That's so," agreed Ted promptly, and the color which had risen high in Glenn's thin cheeks subsided. "Glenn will be what Aunt Sylvia calls a 'right-down driver' for all sorts of outdoor work, I know."

"You just let me get my strength back and I'll keep up with the rest of you," said Glenn; "that's all I want to do."

Marguerite had gone quite close to the big rock, which was really a ledge, and was walking around it, examining it curiously.

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"I see the place where the piece was split off," she announced, "and I see the piece, wedged in, so it closes the mouth of the cave; but I should call it a pretty small cave, Nancy. Do you think your great-great-grandfather and Foster Kildare ever really went inside it?"

"No, I don't suppose they did," admitted Nancy, "for they were both almost men then, seventeen or eighteen years old; but great-great-grandfather used to crawl in there when he was a boy, and sit there listening to the rain, when it stormed. He loved it; and he used to keep a tin box near the mouth of the cave with cookies and other things in it, so that he and Foster Kildare could have luncheons when they were in the woods together. They both liked outdoors much better than indoors, and that was one thing that made them friends."

"Just the way it is with you and me," and Marguerite put her arm around her friend. "Nancy, why didn't you ever tell me about Pirates' Rock before?"

"I forgot about it," said Nancy frankly. "You know we had so many, many things to do when you visited us the first time, Marguerite, and the next time it was winter, and I hadn't been here for five or six years."

"I'll forgive you, so long as it was not intentional," said Marguerite. "Nancy, do look at Roger. I believe he's trying to see into the cave! And look at Dick, copying him. Aren't boys funny?"

"I was wondering about that tin box," said Roger to Jack, a moment later. "If there were any biscuit or cookies left in it, don't you suppose they've ossified?"

Glenn's eyes opened very wide at this. He wished for Desdemona and her phonographic memory.

"I'll find out what that means before night," he promised himself, "but seems to me there are more things I don't know about than I thought there were."

He said it to Jack when they walked back to the camp, a little while after Nancy's search party had discovered them.

"I don't believe I'll ever catch up," Glenn told his new and greatly admired friend. "You see all this time when the Comptons and boys like them were studying out of books, I've been running the streets, selling papers, and doing all kinds of things they never heard of. What I learned in night-school was all right, o' course, but 'twasn't any fancy education, Mr. Jack, I can tell you that. 'Twas just the plainest, every-day reading, writing, geography, and things like that, that I'd *got* to know or else I couldn't ever be anything

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more'n a newsboy. But when I hear a kid like Roger say a word like ossified, and say it in the right place, why, that's when I see how green I am."

"It's my private opinion," said Jack Beaumont in a matter-of-fact tone, "that you've learned some things in your newspaper, hospital, restaurant, self-supporting and lodging, night-school and curbstone career, that are fully as valuable as, and a good deal harder to learn than the meaning of ossified, or any other word. But I'll tell you what we'll do—we'll have a dictionary study class for half an hour every day this summer, you and I, and if the other boys wish to join it, they may. There are several hundred, not to say thousand words in the dictionary of which I don't know the meanings, though of course you'd never suspect it from my fluent conversation," he added with a laugh.

"No, I shouldn't," said Glenn humbly; "I supposed you knew just about all the words there are. That's the way you sound. You don't use a lot of big ones, but you sound so free, as if you could say anything you liked, the way Mr. Sigourney does; he's a—he has fluent conversation too."

"Oh, he's 'way beyond me," said Jack easily, "for he knows a lot of art terms that are just like Greek to me. You can probably get all those from Mona Mac-

donald. I don't believe anything will slip by her unnoticed.”

“She's a smart girl,” said Glenn, “and she says she's going to be a big artist some day ; seems to think all she has to do is make up her mind and never stop working till she gets there ; maybe she's right, too.”

“I shouldn't wonder a bit if she were,” assented Jack, “so long as she has talent as well as perseverance. She's a very interesting little girl. She'll be crazy over the portable house, I know, for she likes play as well as work.”

His words were certainly verified two days later when Desdemona, hurrying up to the Beaumont house, was waylaid by Nancy and Marguerite, and carried off in triumph to the woods.

“I didn't come to visit the camp to-day,” she protested, as the tents came into view. “I had a message for the Admiral from Mrs. Sigourney and I can't stop long, for we're going to paint—oh, Nancy Beaumont and Marguerite Compton, where did that lovely, darling little house come from ?”

The children explained to her, talking as fast as they could, and Desdemona listened delightedly. She was more than ever charmed when, on entering the little living-room, there sat the Admiral in a comfortable

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armchair, looking as if he had come to stay, for Jack had persuaded him to take the walk by slow degrees, with the General on one side and his grandson on the other.

"They have made arrangements so that I shall be able to drive back to the house, by Sylvanus's making a *détour* about the woods," said the Admiral, as he graciously responded to Desdemona's enthusiastic greeting, "and I find Nancy will be more contented to come here now that she knows I can be made comfortable on mild, sunny days. General Compton had such pleasure in providing the house that I should not wish to have him disappointed in any way about it."

"No, sir," said Desdemona respectfully, while her memory registered "*détour*" for reference later on, "of course you wouldn't. And beside, don't they say pine woods are splendid for rheumatism—or is it tuberculosis?"

The Admiral chuckled, as he looked at her, standing there, her red hair gleaming in the sunlight that streamed in through the open door. Her cheeks had a faint tinge of pink, and her eyes had grown almost black, as they had a trick of doing when Desdemona was excited.

"That's one thing I haven't, my dear," said the Ad-

miral in his most amiable tone ; “ my lungs are as good a pair as you’d find if you searched the country over. I have the doctor’s authority for saying so, as well as my own. But I don’t know why the pine woods shouldn’t be good for rheumatism, they and the fir-balsams combined.”

“ Oh, if there are fir-balsams, *may* I have a little, just a little to make a weeny pillow to sleep on ? ” begged Desdemona. “ Just a few little twigs would do for me, Admiral, and I’d leave the needles on the wood, even if it did stick into me. It’s just that I long to smell that deliciousness ! I’ve wished for a balsam pillow all my days, but the cheapest we ever saw were fifty cents without any cover, and you can imagine mother letting me pay fifty cents for anything that wasn’t an absolute necessity ! But now I have a little piece of pongee, and I could paint a spray of balsam on it, and ‘ Sleep Well,’ or some restful sentiment like that, and it would be my greatest treasure. *May* I, Admiral ? ”

“ Yes, yes, child,” said the old man quickly. “ And don’t wear your soul out over trifles. You’re too intense in your feelings about unimportant things. Learn to be calm and moderate, my child ; calm and moderate. Nancy, where do you suppose Sylvanus is, with

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the afternoon mail already fifteen minutes behind his usual time for bringing it? It is outrageous for him to loiter so; outrageous! Go to the end of the path, my dear, and see if there are any signs of him."

Desdemona looked at the Admiral and opened her mouth as if to speak, but at the moment Marguerite clutched her by the arm.

"Come over here, and see our cooking stove, Mona," said Marguerite, and when they had reached it, she said in a tragic whisper:

"Never say what I know was on the tip of your tongue, Mona, just as it's on the tip of mine a dozen times a day! The Admiral never would forgive us for what he'd think was impertinence—and I suppose it would be, really, because he's so many times older than we are, and Nancy's feelings would be dreadfully hurt; because she loves him, *just the way he is*, Mona; when he's cross and inconsistent, she loves him just as much as when he's gentle and pleasant."

"He's a fine old gentleman, of course," said Desdemona reluctantly, "but, Marguerite, do you think he's gentle and pleasant quite as often as he might be, if some one explained to him how he seems the rest of the time? I approve of frankness, don't you?"

"I do when it's necessary," said Marguerite, "but

I'll tell you one thing, Mona, and that is that if you start out with the idea of telling people unpleasant truths when it isn't an absolute necessity, you'll be dreadfully unpopular, and you'll spend half your time being sorry for what you've said."

"All right," said Desdemona agreeably, "I'll think it over. I won't express my mind to the Admiral yet a while anyway," she added mischievously. "I'll let my duty 'wait over a spell,' as mother says about the washing on rainy Mondays, and perhaps I shall find it isn't my duty at all. At any rate I wouldn't do anything to hurt Nancy's feelings for the world. Show me again how that stove-lid lifter works, please. I shall write mother about that to-morrow. And then I want to go outside and look at the house again, from the path. I think there's a place where I could stand and paint it, with Nancy and you sitting in the doorway, in the sunlight ; and then I could do it again by moonlight some night, if Mrs. Sigourney would let me come. You two could be standing in that picture, looking up into the sky. Of course your features wouldn't be clear enough for any one to tell who you were, but it would make a very romantic, interesting picture."

"Can you paint moonlight?" asked Marguerite with unusual respect in her tone.

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"I've never tried," admitted Desdemona, "but I've no doubt I can learn, with practice; Mr. Sigourney could teach any one to paint anything, I'm sure. Let's go out and look at the house, and see if Nancy's coming back. There! I hear her whistle! She must have met Sylvanus, and now the Admiral will be calm and moderate—calm and moderate," and Desdemona's witch-like face took on such a semblance of the Admiral's that Marguerite had to choke her laughter with her handkerchief, before Nancy appeared, her arms clasping the worn old mail-bag which was stuffed almost to the point of bursting.

Nancy blew her whistle and stopped beneath a giant pine.

"First United States mail delivery for Camp Wind-Away," she called in her clear, sweet voice, and blew her whistle the second time.

Every one in the camp had a letter; some of the boys had two, and "Captain" Jack had half a dozen.

"Invitations to go to places for week-ends, and one for a week's yachting," he told Nancy, tossing her the letters one after another as he read them. "Very kind, all of them, but nobody lures me away from my work this summer, little sister, not for one twenty-four hours."

They were sitting side by side on the platform which served as piazza for the little house. Not far away the Admiral and the General were talking over the day's news together. Ted, Roger and Dick had a letter from Malcolm spread on the pine-needles before them, and were laughing over the marginal illustrations. Under one of the pines, leaning against its big trunk, sat Marguerite, Desdemona and Glenn; the boy was reading aloud a letter, a Round-Robin, sent by the nurses in his beloved Children's Hospital. In the dining tent Aunt Sylvia and Mrs. Dole were having a conference. On a rustic bench down by the river's edge sat Mrs. Compton, her white dress flecked with sunlight and shadows.

“Jack—is it—is it just work to you?” asked Nancy wistfully. “You ought to have play, too, in the summer, like all the rest of us.”

“Bless your little heart,” said Jack, taking her hand in both of his and squeezing it gently, “it'll be play as well as work, and the best sort of play. This summer will be the making of me, Nancy.”

But his little sister shook her head, and nestled closer to him.

“You don't need any ‘making of,’” she said indignantly. “You're just the very best way you could be, to suit me!”

CHAPTER IX

THE ART CLASS

It was not all play, by any means, at Camp Wind-Away, in spite of Jack's statement to Nancy. From ten o'clock until twelve every morning in the week except Saturday and Sunday, Ted, Roger and Glenn had lessons with Jack, and from two until three every afternoon they studied. Little Dick was the only one too young to be included in the regular school routine, but he had lessons of various sorts from his mother, father, Nancy and Marguerite, Aunt Sylvia, and the older boys.

"All they study is math'matics and English and Latin," Dick explained to Desdemona one day when he had been sent down to the Sigourneys' with a message, and lingered to watch Desdemona painting an old willow. "But I study all those a little when they have time to 'tend to me, and bot'ny with mother and mil'tary ta'tics with father, and hist'ry with the Ad-m'ral, and spelling with Nancy and Marguerite. Don't you think that's a pretty good deal, Mona?"

"I think it's a wonderful lot," said Desdemona in

the serious way which always made Dick feel that she regarded him as quite a big boy, "but not any too much for your age. When you're six, it's only a little bit of a while before you're ten, and after that it's no time at all till you're fifteen, and when you're fifteen, I can tell you, Dick, people expect you to know a great deal."

"I think you will, when you're fifteen," said Dick gallantly.

"I shan't," said Desdemona, "for the time slips away so fast, and I'm spending most of it learning to paint, or trying to learn," for this was one of the mornings when Desdemona's mercurial spirits had sunk very low.

Dick insinuated five small fingers, sticky from their recent contact with molasses candy, into the palm of Desdemona's left hand which lay upturned in her lap while she gazed at her picture with a gloomy air.

"I think you paint very beautiful," said Dick fervently. "I heard Nancy and Marguerite say they wished you'd teach them."

"Why, I'd love to," said Desdemona eagerly; "you tell them I'll come up this very afternoon—Mr. Sigmourney said I was to go if I liked—and I'll take some paints and brushes for them, and some water-color pa-

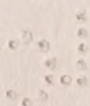
per, and we'll choose something very easy for them to begin on. They're both so smart I'm sure they could learn to paint if they try. You tell them to put on big aprons, Dick, and have two thin boards to tack their paper on and—that's too much to ask you to remember. I'll write it. You wait just a minute."

Dick waited, watching the butterflies, while Desdemona tore a sheet of paper from a block in her basket, scribbled a note on it, folded it into a cocked hat, addressed it to "Miss Nancy Beaumont, Kindness of Richard Compton," and handed it to Dick.

"There," she said, "now you won't have to bother to remember any message, and I'm afraid, Dick, I'll have to stop talking right straight off, or when Mr. Sigourney comes back from the brook where he's painting, he'll think I've been lazy."

"I'll go home," said Dick, comforting himself for his dismissal with a remembrance of the odor which had greeted him when he took a message to Aunt Sylvia, in the Beaumont kitchen, not long before starting down the road on his errand. It was the odor of molasses cookies, unless Dick was greatly mistaken, and a messenger was always entitled to special privileges; he trotted joyfully along on the homeward stretch.

That afternoon, between the hours of two and three,



a small and eager group gathered at the head of the path that led into Camp Wind-Away. It consisted of three young girls and one small boy. Desdemona, who was acting as teacher of the art class, and did not intend to paint except, as she stated to her pupils, "to illustrate my points," was in one of the pretty brown dresses which Marguerite called her "wood-nymph costumes," but Nancy and Marguerite were shrouded from neck to ankles in checked aprons which Aunt Sylvia had put on, with many injunctions.

"I knows what dese painting works does to clothes, honey," she had said to Nancy, who remarked plaintively that the apron was very high-necked and warm, "and you nor Miss Marg'rite isn't 'sperienced enough so you can keep de paint whar it belongs ; and if you came to de Adm'ral's tea-pouring all splotched an' marred up wid paint, my lamb, 'twould be de las' 'tempts you ebber made to be an artis'. I's gwine send 'Vanus down to de camp 'bout half an hour befo' tea-pouring time, an' fotch you back to de house, 'long as de Adm'ral don' feel like he wants to step off'n de piazzy to-day, an' I'll unhitch you bofe out'n dese aprons an' kind o' twitch you round into de right shape, and you devise Mona to be mighty keerful 'bout spotting herself, too. I mistrus' we's gwine hab com-

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p'ny dis afternoon, fo' dat Mis' Potter, she drap out'n her gate an' introspected 'Vanus dis mo'ning, an' axed him a mighty set ob questions 'bout all our doings, so I feels it in my bones dat she won't hol' out longer'n dis aft'noon."

Desdemona had arranged impromptu easels for her two pupils, and provided them with paints and brushes. She had also selected the subject for their first sketches—a small pine which stood quite alone, at the head of the path. She stood behind her pupils, ready to advise and instruct them, as occasion arose.

"Paint it just as you see it," she told them; "probably you'll see it quite differently from each other—you two."

Marguerite had been working steadily and silently for some moments, while Desdemona tried to encourage Nancy. Suddenly Marguerite straightened herself, viewed the result of her efforts, and began to rock back and forth, while she laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks.

"I guess I see it differently from anybody else in the world," she cried. "Please, Mona, tell me what this looks like to you. Don't try to be polite, just speak the plain truth."

Desdemona stepped behind her pupil and squinted



“PAINT IT JUST AS YOU SEE IT”

her eyes, while Dick gazed at the green and yellow effect on his sister's easel in bewilderment.

"I can't think what it looks like," said Desdemona; "it *seems* as if it were something to eat ——"

"That's it," giggled Marguerite; "you're 'warm,' Mona. It looks more like a head of cabbage partly chopped up, with parsley sprigs all over it, than anything else in this world! Mona, I've decided I never was meant for an artist. How do you feel, Nancy? Do you think your grandfather will believe you've inherited your grandmother's talent?"

For answer, Nancy tore her sheet of paper from its board, and then cut it in strips with a pair of shears.

"I wouldn't have grandfather see it for worlds," she said, "for he would think I was crazy. You know you and I feel that grandmother's paintings are pretty stiff, Marguerite, and Mona says they are queer, but at least you can generally tell what grandmother was trying to paint. I've sat here all this time, without even getting the shape of the tree. Look!" and she spread the strips before Marguerite. "And Mona has been as patient as she could be! I shan't try again. All I can do is to embroider and darn things—that's my only accomplishment," and Nancy looked quite sorrowful.

"You've given up too soon," said Desdemona, but her

tone was not a very assured one, and her pupils faced her with reproachful eyes.

"How long do you think we should have to work before we could paint a tree that any one would recognize, Mona?" demanded Marguerite. "We that have had drawing lessons and are old enough to have some sense."

"Well," admitted Desdemona, slowly, "I don't know. There's a little girl in our school who's only eight, and she's never had drawing lessons, but she made a tree that really looked like a tree one day when I took her out in the park—so I'm almost afraid ——"

"You needn't say another word," and Marguerite removed the work of art from her board with one free and vigorous movement of her hands. "Let's go to Aunt Sylvia and be taken out of these aprons, where she sewed us in to make sure they wouldn't slip, and rest a little before 'tea-pouring' time. Mona, don't you almost roast when you're painting these warm days? I'm about melted!"

"I never think anything about it, I'm so interested," said Desdemona, as they walked slowly up the path toward the house.

Nancy and Marguerite exchanged glances.

"That shows how different we are, Mona," said

Nancy. "I've remembered how hot the sun is almost every minute since I began to paint."

"Perhaps that was the reason neither of you could paint a tree," said Desdemona hopefully. "We might try it again some cool day and ——"

"Oh, no," said Nancy and Marguerite with one accord, shaking their heads most decidedly.

"I couldn't paint a tree, even if it were a very, very cool day, I'm perfectly sure," said Nancy, "though it's just as kind of you, Mona, to offer me another chance. Perhaps Marguerite might do it."

"No indeed," said Marguerite hastily. "I should probably do still worse the next time, Mona, thank you just as much. I think our sketching class will have to be disbanded."

"On account of lack of talent," said Nancy, "though we know we had a fine teacher. Oh, don't you hear wheels? If we hurry perhaps we can reach the orchard and be out of sight before the carriage gets to the turn in the driveway."

They ran, and almost reached the shelter of the apple trees; not quite, however. Mrs. Potter, driven by Bartley Pearson, leaned forward, her far-sighted glasses astride her nose, and gazed at the three little flying figures.

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“Have they got a Fresh Air delegation here, or who are those children, do you suppose?” she demanded of her companion. “They’ve got some sort of a blue and white checked uniform on, such as I’ve seen in pictures, two of ’em have, and the third one looks like that girl down at the Sigourneys’. See here, you don’t suppose that could have been Nancy and her friend Marguerite Compton, do you? The Admiral wouldn’t ever hear of Nancy’s running around dressed up that way, whatever the Comptons might allow. Nancy’s been brought up very particular and careful.”

“Sho, now, I guess you can’t tell me anything new about the way she’s been brought up,” said Mr. Pearson, slightly irritated by Mrs. Potter’s air of superior knowledge. “My folks have always lived round here, and I know the Beaumonts, root an’ branch, and all their ways. Folks that have only lived hereabouts for a little matter o’ twenty years better not undertake to instruct me,” and his moon face took on a stubborn look.

“I wasn’t intending to,” said Mrs. Potter stiffly, and there fell a moment’s silence. “Not that there’s any harm in checked aprons, if that’s what they were,” she added thoughtfully, just before the last turn in the driveway.

“Not a mite,” assented Bartley Pearson, resuming his usual mildness. “Time will tell whether that’s what they were or weren’t. Is this the spot you wanted I should stop while you change to your other glasses?”

“Yes, ’twas, and you were real thoughtful to bear it in mind,” said Mrs. Potter gratefully; and the transfer being accomplished, they rounded the turn and drew up at the front door in a most amicable state of mind, as beseemed old and tried friends and neighbors.

“Ah,” said Mr. Pearson, as he spied the Admiral’s figure at the open door, “I was minded to come out and pay you a call, sir, this fine afternoon, between post-office hours, and I found my neighbor Mrs. Potter desired to take the air—so here we are, Admiral, here we are!”

Admiral Beaumont advanced slowly, to meet his guests, leaning heavily on his walking-stick. His mouth was set in what was meant for a smile of welcome, but his face was drawn with pain, for his gout, defying the heat, had attacked him a few hours before, not as boldly as it sometimes did, to be sure, but quite boldly enough to render its victim most uncomfortable.

“It is kind of you to take the long drive on such a warm day,” said the Admiral, shaking hands with Mr.

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Pearson, who had nimbly alighted. "I am sorry that I cannot offer Mrs. Potter the assistance which I should gladly give her, owing to my crippled condition."

"Don't speak of it, sir," said Mr. Pearson, with a wave of his hand, before holding it out to grasp Mrs. Potter's elbow. "Careful, now, ma'am, not to overreach the step, and lose your balance. You aren't so young as you were, nor so light on your feet, and it's well to take care."

"I guess it's some time since he's looked in the glass, Admiral," said Mrs. Potter with a toss of the head on which her new summer hat was insecurely pinned. "He'd better look in it once in a while, and see if there isn't somebody else taking on years and flesh. How's your health, now, aside from your affliction, I mean?"

"It is excellent, madam," said the Admiral, shaking the hand extended to him in a new gray silk glove. "Will you sit on the piazza, or do you prefer the house?"

"The piazza for me every time," said Mr. Pearson without waiting for Mrs. Potter to express her wish. "How-d'y-do, Sylvanus; you needn't take the horse out to the barn, 'less you want to. He'll stand all right, where he is."

Sylvanus, who had removed his cap in respectful

greeting to Mrs. Potter, led the horse off with the air of not having heard any remark addressed to him.

"Oh, very well, do just as you like," Mr. Pearson called after him amiably. "Seems pretty uppity, but I've got used to his ways," said the postmaster turning to his host. "Shall we take chairs, Adm'ral? I see here's one that looks about the fit for me," and with no further ado, Mr. Pearson sank on to a comfortable seat and removed his hat.

"Air feels good; you have considerable air up here," he remarked genially. "Where's my little friend Miss Nancy?"

The Admiral always stiffened when with Bartley Pearson, try as he might to preserve a cordial attitude. Mrs. Potter knew much better how to please him.

"All the way up, I kept thinking what a fine thing it is that there are some old families left, to live on their beautiful old places," she said diplomatically, when the Admiral, after a stare of displeasure at Mr. Pearson's lapse of courtesy, selected a chair for her. "It makes everything in Potterville seem so kind of new and glarey—Beaumont Corners does, Admiral. Not but what new things are good, and we need them, but there isn't the same *air* to them, nor the same *rest*. I don't know as I express myself plainly," and Mrs. Potter

looked at her host with an expression so conciliatory and meek that it is doubtful whether her husband would have recognized it.

The Admiral bowed and looked at her with distinct approval as he took his seat near her.

"You have expressed a thought which has often been in my mind, madam," he said, "although it might have seemed to savor of pride had I put it into words."

"Not at all, sir," Mrs. Potter assured him hastily. "I'm sure you've every right to feel so. This is the most beautiful spot anywhere 'round, as I often say to your granddaughter when she stops in for a little talk with me. I enjoy having her come very much, and she favors me real often. I've missed her a great deal, during your absence."

"I'm sure she enjoys her visits to you, madam," returned the Admiral, for, he thought, this was really a most agreeable guest even if her hat was rather youthful and had assumed a strange angle on her head. "By the way, it is time Nancy was here, I think."

"I wonder if it could have been her figur' and two others we saw," began Mr. Pearson, hitching his chair nearer the center of conversation, with a rasping sound which caused the Admiral's brows to knit.

He got no farther, for Mrs. Potter, leaning forward,

shot a glance full of warning at him and again took the reins of conversation into her own hands.

“She must be having a lovely time now her friend Miss Marguerite’s here,” said Mrs. Potter, with strong accent on the *Miss* for Bartley Pearson’s benefit. “And I suppose she sees a good deal of that little Macdonald girl, too; she wrote me about her last winter, and then I understand there’s a great deal going on down at your new camp in the woods, Admiral. Sylvanus told me this morning that you had ‘an accumulation of young gentlemen’ there. He loves so to use long words, but dear me, he is the most faithful creature that ever was in this world, when it comes to your interests, Admiral! And I must say, it seems as if Beaumont Corners was going to be the head of social life this summer, just as I hear it used to be in former times. It must be real pleasant to be in that position. I know just a little how ’tis, from being president of the Potterville Woman’s Club. I don’t know as you ever heard of our organization, but we have real social meetings, every fortnight, from October till May. This winter we have been reading Shakespeare. What is your opinion of him, as a writer, Admiral?”

“Ah,” said Admiral Beaumont, with great delibera-

tion, "my opinion is—— Here comes Nancy with her friends, Mrs. Potter. Let us leave the consideration of Shakespeare for a more propitious time—with your permission, of course, madam."

"Why certainly," said Mrs. Potter, quite overcome with gratification at his deferential manner, and she rose to greet Nancy, pleasantly excited, her hat swaying unsteadily over her left ear. "We'll have plenty of other opportunities, I hope, Admiral."

CHAPTER X

VISITORS

NANCY and Marguerite sat talking to Mrs. Potter, but Desdemona, when her introduction to the visitors had been accomplished, found herself confronted by the round, slightly bulging eyes of Bartley Pearson, who gazed at her as if he found something irresistibly fascinating in her appearance.

"You aren't one of Nancy's rich city friends, according to what I hear going the rounds," said Mr. Pearson, by way of opening conversation.

Desdemona nodded at him, her face alight with amusement. She had heard many stories about the postmaster of Potterville from Nancy and the Comptons.

"Rich," she said earnestly, "I guess not! Didn't you know I lived in a basement, half under the sidewalk, in the house where the Beaumonts had their suite?"

"Well, there," and Bartley Pearson's eyes bulged more than usual with amazement, "I did hear something o' the kind, but I thought 'twas misrepresented

to me. Do I understand it's what they call a 'slum,' where you reside?"

"Slum!" echoed Desdemona, her indignation for a moment getting the better of her amusement, and there was an angry light in her gray eyes.

"Well, I don't mean any offense," said Mr. Pearson hastily. "I've never seen one myself, and I kind of thought they were underground, or mostly so."

"All right, I won't get mad,—though I was for a minute," said Desdemona frankly, "for slums aren't at all like the place where I live, even if my home is in a basement. All janitors live in basements, unless they live in a house somewhere else. My family is no worse off than others, and our location is fine."

"I'm glad to hear it," said Mr. Pearson, bewildered, but determined to gain all the information he could. "Sightly spot, I take it."

"Well, no," admitted Desdemona, "not exactly what you'd call sightly, but real select, Mr. Pearson."

"I see," and the postmaster nodded, with pursed lips, his mind in a whirl. "What you'd call tony?"

"No, I should never call it that," said Desdemona decidedly, "for I'd never use that word."

"Wouldn't?" inquired Mr. Pearson. "Well, in

Potterville we make use of it. You gather my meaning's the same as your 'select,' don't ye?"

"Yes," and Desdemona laughed. "We'd better not keep getting provoked with each other," she said, "or we shan't get on very fast."

"You're a free-spoken piece," remarked Mr. Pearson, "but there's something about you I kind of cottoned to the first minute I laid eyes on ye."

"Perhaps it's my hair," said Desdemona, mischief sparkling in her eyes. "Do you admire red above every other color?"

"No, I don't," said Bartley Pearson bluntly, "not but what it's well enough. I don't object to it, mind ye, only it would never be my choice."

"Nor mine, either," said Desdemona, "so we're agreed there; but it's all I have, and artists like it ever so much."

"I want to know," said Mr. Pearson dubiously; "well, they're a queer lot, I reckon, artists are. Some folks go so far as to say the most of 'em are onbalanced—but that's putting it a little too strong for me. All I'd say is, they lack common sense."

Desdemona threw back her head and laughed until every one on the piazza turned to look at her. Bartley Pearson gazed at her, his mouth slightly open, trying

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to imagine what he had said that struck this little red-haired girl as so amusing.

"If there's a joke, Mona, I'd like to hear it," said Marguerite, but Desdemona shook her head.

"No," she said, choking back her laughter and trying to be very sober, "it's not a joke at all. It only seemed funny to me. Mr. Pearson thinks artists lack common sense."

The Admiral bent a displeased gaze on Mr. Pearson's open countenance.

"You probably have had small acquaintance in the world of art, sir," he said severely. "My wife was an artist, and I can assure you there never was a lady possessed of greater common sense than she had. I trust you will hold your opinion in reserve, awaiting fuller experience, sir. Have you had the privilege of meeting my friend and neighbor, Mr. Wilfred Sigourney?"

"I've been seeing him at the post-office for the last week, off an' on," stated Mr. Pearson. "I hadn't thought of it as being any special privilege, Adm'ral, but if you say 'tis, why, I suppose it must be. But I can tell you one thing, if I was his mother I wouldn't let him borrow my silk ribbons and so on to tie under his collar; I'd buy him some suitable men's neckties,

and put 'em on him. Well, what's setting you off now?" he demanded of Desdemona, who had begun to laugh again.

"Nothing," said Desdemona, her voice smothered in her handkerchief, "nothing at all, Mr. Pearson."

"I think Mrs. Potter and Mr. Pearson would both like to see Camp Wind-Away, grandfather," said Nancy, foreseeing more questions from the postmaster. "May we take them down there for half an hour, and then come back to you for our tea-drinking?"

"An excellent suggestion, my dear," said the Admiral who had begun to feel tired, in spite of Mrs. Potter's agreeable remarks. "I will remain here, and await your return."

"Marguerite and I took our first, and last, painting lesson to-day, Mrs. Potter," said Nancy, as they walked away from the house. "We have decided we shall never be artists, so we have given it up at once."

"Well, I think you made a good decision," said Mrs. Potter. "It's real mussy work, say what you've a mind to, and your grandfather'd never bear it to see you anything but spick and span; and I shouldn't suppose Miss Marguerite's mother would, either. Having so many boys in the family she must have all the spots and stains to look after that anybody ought to

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be called upon to attend to; and she strikes me as a very dainty person."

"She is," said Marguerite and Nancy together, both much pleased with the compliment.

"Aunt Sylvia pinned us into big checked aprons before we took our lesson," said Marguerite, for the children felt sure Mrs. Potter had seen them in spite of their endeavors to get out of sight. "We didn't get so much as a pinhead of paint on our clothes—but my apron!"

Mrs. Potter nodded, comprehendingly.

"I'll wager 'twas a sight," she said. "Bartley Pearson, don't you go striding on so fast. I ought to be the one to go ahead of you when we get to the camp. Don't you recollect it's 'ladies first'?"

Mr. Pearson reluctantly halted, and allowed the company to come abreast of him, and then pass him, although it must be said that he kept so closely behind Marguerite and Desdemona that he several times trod on their heels.

"Kind of a narrow way to get into the woods," he commented, as they turned into the last little winding path.

"Depends on how broad you are," Mrs. Potter threw over her shoulder; "Nancy and I don't seem to have

any trouble side by side, nor the other two young ladies. You get on the scales when you're back home, Bartley, and see what they'll tell you."

"I wa'n't speaking from a personal standpoint," said Mr. Pearson, reproachfully. "I was just gener'lizing. That's a pretty clump o' trees ahead. I expect there's a consider'ble lot of money going to waste in these woods, Nancy. Get a portable sawmill in here now and ——"

"You put a portable sawmill right into that old post-office o' yours first, and make away with the old truck and dicker you've got in there, before you start planning for other folks' woods that are a credit to the landscape," interrupted Mrs. Potter indignantly, seeing the flush on Nancy's cheek. "What's come over you to be so ready with suggestions this afternoon?" she inquired more mildly.

"I don't intend any harm, ma'am," said Mr. Pearson, with dignity. "This being a holiday with me, my mind is relaxed from its reg'lar duties, and free to take up outside matters. I can keep silence, if that's what's desired of me," and he looked really offended.

"Mercy no, say on, for all o' me," said Mrs. Potter, and as they went along the path Desdemona turned a laughing face to the postmaster.

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"I wouldn't have you stop talking for anything," she told him; "I love to hear you, Mr. Pearson."

"Well now, I'm looking forward to more of your conversation," said Mr. Pearson, falling into step with her. "I want to know the partic'lars about that home o' yours, and some points on janitors as a whole, though I don't know as there'll be fitting opportunity to-day."

"Not to-day, probably," said Desdemona, "for we're right at the camp now. See the name on that board—Camp Wind-Away—Mr. Jack Beaumont made that sign; aren't the letters handsome?"

"They look pretty fair," said Mr. Pearson after a close examination. "I don't believe but what he could get the job of doing the new road-signs if he wanted it. Town's got to have some, and they'd pay ten dollars or so for the lot. I understand money's none too plenty with the Beaumonts. The Admiral had to part with some land, you probably know, to raise the money for their city wintering, Nancy's schooling and so on. It's no secret," he added, seeing the expression on Desdemona's face.

"I don't know anything about their affairs, and I don't wish to," she said, her gray eyes looking straight into his, her mouth very firm. "All I know is that

they're fine people, and that Nancy has been perfectly beautiful to me, and made my life all over, and that I love her and love her with all my heart, and I don't want ever to hear a word against anybody who's part of her family or one of her friends. And I guess the Admiral would take your head off if he heard you suggesting that Mr. Jack should paint sign-boards for money," she added frankly.

"Well now, he'd have some little trouble getting it off," announced Mr. Pearson without rancor. "It's been on my shoulders some sixty-five years, and I'm calc'ulating to keep it right there, till I'm done with it. Your words kind o' fly away with you, now and again, I reckon. There's worse work than painting sign-boards, I can tell ye. I want to know if that's the play-house I've been hearing about down to the freight depot. Well, well! I wonder what we'll come to, next! Do I understand that came up here, by railroad, all ready to set up? What's keeping it anchored, in case of a big wind?"

"How-d'you-do, Mr. Pearson?" came Jack Beaumont's voice, and the postmaster turned to see Jack, with Ted, Roger, Dick and Glenn, standing near one of the tents, each with a big white towel in his hands.

"How-d'you-do?" said Mr. Pearson, his eyes fastened

on the towel in Jack's hands for a moment, then roaming to the others. "Been having some kind of a drill, I take it."

"We've been in swimming," said Jack. "If you'd been here an hour earlier perhaps we could have persuaded you to go in with us."

"No, sir," and Mr. Pearson's face took on as resolute a look as it could assume; "my swimming days were over some forty-five years ago. Whereabouts do you go? Down to the old pool?"

"The very spot," said Jack. "Did you come way up here when you were a boy, sir?"

"Not often," said Mr. Pearson, "but your great-grandfather used to give a picnic to the townsfolks every summer, and I never missed coming once. It was quite an occasion for all the children, specially the boys. We used to go in swimming, and then sit on Pirates' Rock afterward and tell stories, some we'd heard and some we made up as we went along, I reckon. And then some o' the boys would try digging for treasure," he added. "I suppose the old rock's all overgrown, or the way to it is, nowadays."

"We've been clearing a path to it," said Jack, while the boys looked at Mr. Pearson's mild face with new interest. "I'll show you. But don't you want to see

the tents first, and then the house? I see Mrs. Potter has already been taken into the house, and you won't wish her to say she's seen more than you have, I know. I shouldn't, in your place."

"I'm at your service," announced the postmaster, and he briskly followed Jack into his tent, the boys grouping themselves about him, to lose none of his comments, and occasionally they called his attention to something he might otherwise have missed.

Meanwhile Mrs. Potter was examining the house in a thorough and professional manner. She sought for cracks through which the rain might leak, to ruin the shining little stove, the cot-beds, the rattan chairs or the pretty green cotton rags, but not a crack could she find. She examined the corners and the doors, the little steps and the window-casings.

"Well, I never saw the beat of it!" she admitted, at last. "You just wait till I tell my husband about this; he thinks he can tell a good job of carpentering when he sees it, but he's never seen anything like this. He'll be set to make such a house himself. I wish he could see it."

"Why can't he see it, Mrs. Potter?" asked the General who had come from his tent to join the visitors. "Give him a most cordial invitation from the camp.

I've heard from Nancy about the clever work he did for her in that wonderful freight car in which she made her eventful journey."

"Why, he'd be pleased to come," and Mrs. Potter colored with gratification. "He's never one to put himself forward; he holds back too much, if anything, but given a cordial invitation and a mite of urging from me, he's ready to go half-way. He could ride out some Saturday afternoon."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Jack. "We'll have a picnic, such as Mr. Pearson's been telling us they used to have here, when he was a boy. We'll ask all our friends in town, and I'll get Mr. Potter to help me plan some rough tables. Would he be able to spare the time, do you think?"

Mrs. Potter's color rose still higher in her thin cheeks.

"He will," she said firmly, but with a good deal of excitement in her tone. "He'll be glad to, Mr. Jack."

"That matter being satisfactorily settled," said Mr. Pearson in a rather impatient tone, "I should like to ask if I'm to be allowed to set foot in this house I've been hearing about, as Mrs. Potter's been privileged to do, or have I got to view it from where I stand? I've seen tents before now; that is, I've seen *one*," he added with Mrs. Potter's eyes fixed accusingly on him,

“when the circus came to Potterville two years ago, but a portable house is something I never have seen. Will it hold my weight, think?”

“Come right in, Mr. Pearson,” urged Nancy, “and see for yourself.”

The postmaster stepped cautiously over the threshold, then raised himself on tiptoe and let himself down on to his heels. A little dish on the table rattled, but everything else remained unshaken. He thrust his hands deep into his pockets and looked about him, at the comfortable room, with its pretty furnishings, and gazed inquiringly at the doors which evidently led to other rooms. He stepped to the three windows, one after another, and looked out at the woods. He ran his finger up and down the walls, and stooped to examine the floor. Then, at last, he seated himself, without waiting for an invitation, in the largest chair.

“Well,” he said after due deliberation, “well, I’ve seen automobiles and I’m looking forward to clapping my eyes some day on a flying machine, but with a house such as this that wa’n’t in existence, so to speak, a week ago, and now is here, complete, for me to sit in and view, I realize more’n I ever did before that we live in an age o’ *progress*, and I don’t care who hears me say it—an age o’ *progress*!”

CHAPTER XI

AT WIND-AWAY LODGE

IT was a week after the visit of Mrs. Potter and Mr. Pearson that Nancy and Marguerite were in the little house in the woods, preparing for visitors one afternoon. They were dressed in the checked aprons which they had worn at their only painting lesson and Aunt Sylvia and Mrs. Dole were superintending their efforts to make a new sort of cooky, invented by Aunt Sylvia, and designed to be served with afternoon tea.

Neither of the little cooks had much trust in her own ability, and while Aunt Sylvia encouraged them, Mrs. Dole eyed them with a dubious air, and from time to time voiced her opinions as to the probable results of their energy.

"You don't handle de mixing spoon like you's acquainted wid it, Miss Nancy," she remarked, hovering over the bowl in which Nancy was stirring a yellowish mixture, "and you, Miss Marg'rite, can't you get de lumps out'n dat mixture ob yours? Whar did you get such lumps, anyhow, Miss Marg'rite?"

“Please don’t talk that way, Mrs. Dole; you’re making me nervous,” begged Marguerite. “I put in the ingredients just exactly the way Aunt Sylvia told me to; there must have been lumps in the sugar and the butter at the very beginning.”

“Suah, chile, you wouldn’t hab de ingregiencies *running*, from de firs’ minute!” cried Mrs. Dole, and at last her anxiety gave way to mirth. “Hyah dat, now,” she said to Aunt Sylvia. “Ain’ dat de beatin’est you ebber heard?”

“Work yo’ spoon a leetle mite more free, honey,” Aunt Sylvia was adjuring Nancy. “Don’ be so ser’ous wid it; seems like it’ll make dose cookies too solid tast-ing, less’n you kind o’ play wid de spoon a teeny mite. Dat’s right! Now, I’ll pour in de nuts, and Mrs. Dole, you pour in for Miss Marg’rite, an’ we’ll jess gib de final twis’ to de mixture, an’ den drap it onto de wax paper, an’ clap it into dat leetle cunnin’ stove. Kind ob a trinket, I call dat stove, but it does mighty good work. Lan’s sake, don’ I ketch de sound o’ voices?”

“It’s Mrs. Carter,” said Nancy, after listening for a second. “She’s come back from her visit, and she said she’d come here just as soon as she could. She got home only last night. She’s made grandfather walk

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down here with her. Oh, Marguerite, I'm so glad you'll see her ! ”

Aunt Sylvia was unbuttoning Nancy's apron, while Mrs. Dole performed the same office for Marguerite. The Admiral and his guest were advancing slowly but surely. Nancy knew that Mrs. Carter was purposely talking louder than usual, so that they might know she was coming. As Aunt Sylvia gathered one apron into her hands, and Mrs. Dole secured the other, there came a gleam of white and gold through the trees, and Nancy ran out of the house, followed by Marguerite.

“ Praise be,” said Aunt Sylvia and Mrs. Dole in concert, under their breaths, and with cheerful faces and practiced hands they finished the composition of the cookies and placed them in the little stove.

“ You blessed child, you're sweeter than ever, I do believe,” cried Mrs. Carter as she bent her head with its great white hat and drew Nancy close to the beautiful gold embroidered dress. “ Isn't she, Admiral Beaumont ? Speak the truth, sir, just as if she were not your granddaughter.”

Marguerite expected to see the Admiral's face assume its sternest and most disapproving expression at this question, and what from another person's lips he would have called “ extravagant language ” ; but the Admiral

was listening with an indulgent smile, such as he would have given to no one else, in Marguerite's opinion. The sight of Nancy's pink cheeks so close to the brilliant beauty of Mrs. Carter's dark face, the sound of the merry, deliciously impertinent voice of his charming guest, left the Admiral quite without power or wish to criticize.

"You may be right, madam," he said in a tone of great amusement, not without a tinge of pride. "Her present position is certainly one to make her appear at her best," and he bowed low, while Nancy dimpled with pleasure.

"I'd like to introduce my friend Marguerite Comp-ton," she said as Mrs. Carter released her, and Marguerite stepped forward to take the slender hand outstretched to her, falling at once under the spell of Mrs. Carter's charm. "She's heard me talk about you so much that she feels almost as if she knew you."

"And so she does," said Mrs. Carter with what Marguerite called an enchanting smile. "Nancy's best friend must be a friend of mine, or I shall be very, very sad. You've never seen me sad, Admiral Beaumont, I think."

"Never, madam," said the Admiral gravely, but with twinkling eyes, "and I trust I may be spared the sight."

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"I wish to see everybody and everything in Camp Wind-Away," said Mrs. Carter with pretty imperiousness when the Admiral had been installed in his chair, not without some remonstrance on his part. "First of all, what is the name of this dear little house?"

"We haven't given it a name," said Nancy and Marguerite together, looking at each other, and Nancy added, "but it ought to have a name, of course."

"Of course it ought," said Marguerite. "You name it for us, Mrs. Carter, won't you? Wouldn't that be nice, Nancy? We'd like a very romantic name, Mrs. Carter, and yet a practical one, I think."

"Because it's romantic to have a house in the woods," said Nancy, "and yet we do very practical things in it; at least we mean to; Mrs. Dole has done most of the practical things for us, so far."

"Let me think," said Mrs. Carter, and she leaned forward, holding her chin in the cup of her hands, resting her elbows on the arms of the rustic chair in which she had seated herself. "Romantic—and practical—ro-man-tic and prac-ti-cal. Why not call it Wind-Away Lodge?"

Nancy and Marguerite clasped each other's hands and looked at their beautiful friend with unconcealed admiration.

"I should have thought and thought and *never* have thought of that," said Marguerite, "and yet it's the very simplest, most appropriate name for it."

"They have caretakers in lodges, don't they?" asked Nancy. "And don't they serve tea sometimes to visitors who come to see the grand English estates, the lodge keepers, I mean? And the lodge is always near the entrance. Oh, Mrs. Carter, we do thank you, and it will be called Wind-Away Lodge from this very minute, won't it, Marguerite?"

"Indeed it will," said Marguerite, and when, a few moments later, Jack and the boys came up the path from the river, they were informed of the christening in the next breath after being presented to the visitor.

Jack was a favorite with Mrs. Carter and they fell into a bantering talk to which the Admiral listened, much amused, adding a word now and then. Before long the General and Mrs. Compton joined the group, and the children, finding the conversation rather too grown up to interest them, strolled off to one of the giant pines and seated themselves in a circle before it, drawing lots to see which one should tell a story. This was one of their "hot-day 'musements," suggested by Aunt Sylvia, whom they frequently cajoled into being the story-teller, without regard to the length of the slip

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of paper she had drawn. Aunt Sylvia was never reckoned with the grown-ups, but always with the children, whom she much preferred for companions. Today, however, they knew Aunt Sylvia was busy, and it would be of no use to plead with her; so they drew lots, and the longest slip fell to Glenn's share.

"Tell us a hospital story," said Ted, and the others all chimed in, "Yes, tell us a hospital story."

"I can't think of one right off the bat, like that," said Glenn. "Oh, I don't suppose you know what that means."

"I do," said Roger proudly. "I've been to baseball games with my father; he and I are the only ones in the family that care for baseball, but *we* do. It means served right up, hot and quick," he explained to Ted, while the others listened respectfully. "If you'd go once in a while, instead of thinking football is the only game," he added by way of advice, "you'd learn a lot of terms like that."

"As long as you know them, I don't need to," said Ted good-naturedly, for it was a rule of Camp Wind-Away that snubbing was to be avoided, and Roger seldom had a chance to display superior knowledge.

"I'll tell you what I've been thinking about," said Glenn. "I've been remembering what a kid who'd

come to the hospital with a broken leg told me one night when he was kind of wide-awake and they let me stay with him a while. I asked him what was the best fun he'd ever had in his life, and he told me 'twas playing in what he called a Kitchen Orchestra. Did any of you ever hear of one?"

"Never!" cried the children all together. "What is it?"

"Why, it's a make-believe orchestra," said Glenn. "His father played in a real orchestra, and the summer before this kid broke his leg, a lot of the musicians and their families were together for a month at a seashore place where there were ever so many cottages. And they got up this Kitchen Orchestra, and everybody played in it one night, just for fun, and they let some of the neighbors come to the place on the beach where they had a bonfire and listen to them."

"But what kind of instruments did they have?" asked Nancy.

"They had all kinds, by what the kid told me," and Glenn began to smile at the recollection. "They had iron skillets and stew-pans and griddles, with twine fastened across them for strings, and they played on them with knives and picked at them with forks. Some things they beat on with spoons, and some they

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struck with hammers. And whether their instruments made any noise or not—and a lot of them didn't—there was a tune going all the time, for they hummed it right along, while they were playing. I was thinking it would be kind of good fun if we could do something like that to celebrate the General's birthday. He told me it was the fifteenth of July, and I thought it would make him laugh; he's so easy to laugh," added Glenn, modestly.

"How did father happen to tell you about his birthday?" asked Ted curiously.

Glenn colored, but his eyes looked straight into Ted's.

"He was asking me when mine came," said Glenn, "and I told him—I told him I didn't just know, except it was in the winter some time. Mrs. Leahy couldn't quite remember—and it don't make any difference anyway. The General said he was all the time wishing his birthday didn't come around so often; and then he said 'twould be 'round again pretty soon. That was how it happened."

"I wouldn't ever have known when my birthday came, if my mother hadn't put it in a book and showed it to me," said Dick, sitting a little closer to Glenn, and placing a small hand on his hero's knees. "Most

proba'ly your mother didn't have one of those books, and so Mrs. Leahy couldn't tell you."

"I reckon that's the way of it," said Glenn, his fingers closing over Dick's.

"I think it's a perfectly splendid idea to have the orchestra," said Marguerite. "Oughtn't we to begin to rehearse right off? Who'll tell us about the instruments?"

"Mrs. Carter will, I know," said Nancy. "She belonged to an orchestral club before she came to Potterville to live. She'll tell us everything."

"Can I play in it, Glenn?" asked little Dick anxiously.

"Play in it? You? Sure you can!" Glenn answered him with his wide smile. "I reckon 'twouldn't be the right kind of an orchestra for us, if you couldn't play in it."

"I think we'd better go and ask Mrs. Carter now, don't you, Nancy?" suggested Marguerite. "If we wait for them to stop talking we'll have to wait forever!"

Glenn was urged into the foreground when the children went back to Wind-Away Lodge, and stood waiting for a pause in the conversation, so that they might insert a few words. Mrs. Carter, turning, saw the

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merry Irish eyes fixed admiringly on her, and held out her hand.

"Come and shake hands with me again," she said. "The first time was just for politeness; let's do it for real friendliness this time, and then tell me whatever it is that's almost running off the tip of your tongue."

Glenn's eyes brimmed with fun and admiration mixed with daring.

"I'm set to ask you something," he said, "but when I looked at you, I fair forgot what it was I was to say, for thinking of what I was looking at," and he ducked his head in a funny little bow.

"Bravo!" said Jack under his breath, and the Admiral looked at Glenn with surprised interest.

"I declare that wasn't a bad compliment," said the General to Mrs. Compton; "not bad at all."

But Mrs. Carter's eyes sparkled with delighted appreciation, and, rising, she dropped a curtsy to the little newsboy, still holding his hand, so that she gave the effect of a quaint and stately figure in the minuet.

"I shall tell that to my husband," she said gaily as she released Glenn's hand and resumed her seat. "I shall tell him he'll have to think very hard to make me a prettier compliment than that. Say on, Sir Knight. Ask any favor you like."

Nancy and Marguerite listened with eager ears. They could not talk that way themselves, but they liked to hear Mrs. Carter do it. Ted and Roger, on the other hand, regarded it as a foolish preliminary to a matter of vital interest, while little Dick was frankly impatient. Having attached himself to his mother's chair, he besought her influence in a piercing whisper.

"Mother," he begged, "can't you stop them talking that way, and ask Glenn to hurry up? 'Cause I heard Aunt Sylvia rattling the teacups, and time's going faster and faster, and he hasn't told anything yet!"

Then, the whisper having reached everybody's ears, they all laughed and when the laugh was over Glenn began the story which led to the formation of the Camp Wind-Away Orchestra, an organization which gave much amusement to its members, and a concert which was reported at great length in the *Potterville Clarion*; but that came weeks later, near the close of the summer, and between while many things happened.

CHAPTER XII

GLENN TALKS TO THE ADMIRAL

GLENN enjoyed the life at Camp Wind-Away in every particular. He learned to dive and to swim, to row and to paddle, to fish and to hit a target. He studied and recited and looked up troublesome words in the big dictionary in the library at the Beaumont house, with the same zest that he gave to play.

"You like to do everything, it seems to me, my boy," said the Admiral one day, when Glenn had been poring over an old encyclopædia, searching for information about a kind of ship which the Admiral had mentioned in general conversation that afternoon. "Jack tells me you're an enthusiast over all the sports, and the General says you drill as if you meant to be commander of an army some day."

Glenn colored, but looked at the old man smiling.

"Sure, sir, I do like everything," he said frankly. "Seems to me there isn't anything but what's fun if you do it hard enough. Some o' the newsboys used to get grouchy and tired, standing 'round waiting for their customers, but I used to be running, running to

meet mine, or after 'em, if they got by, when I was across the street, and I never was tired to hurt me. 'Twas so interesting, sir. Don't you think folks and things are awful interesting, Admiral?"

"Perhaps they are," said the old man, wistfully. "I've not mingled with many people of late years, you see, my boy; living so far away from the world and all its doings, and from all my friends, I have rather a dull life. That is why we went to the city last winter—so that Nancy should not grow into narrow ways, and have no opportunities for enlarging her views and her knowledge."

Glenn looked at him with a puzzled face, a little frown drawing his black eyebrows together.

"I don't understand," he said slowly. "Of course I know how 'tis about the school, because Nancy told me, and I think it's all right, but seems to me this is the most beautiful place in the world for her to be in most o' the time, and I know Nancy thinks so. And there's Potterville full o' folks, Admiral, and all kinds! I was talking about the city one day to one o' the doctors at the hospital and telling him how I wondered what kind of folks there'd be here, and he laughed and said, 'Why, all kinds, same as in the city! Didn't you know that? You match 'em up

when you get there, and see if I haven't told you the truth.' And he had, Admiral—sure as you live, he had! I've been to Potterville with Mr. Jack, and with Nancy and Aunt Sylvia, and once with Sylvanus—and every time I've seen different kinds of folks. And they're all good friends o' yours, sir. They're always inquiring about you, real particular."

"Yes, they're all very kind," said the Admiral, "very kind."

He sat looking at the boy, wondering if the differences in social standing which exist in the world would ever disturb him. Glenn was aware that there were differences, the Admiral knew, but he seemed to consider them of no special importance, and that was not a matter for much surprise, considering his own sudden transplanting to a different world from the one in which he had lived since babyhood. The Admiral leaned his head against the back of his chair and gazed so thoughtfully at him that Glenn flushed a little.

"How about this Socialism that Nancy finds so much in evidence in the newspapers, my boy?" mused the Admiral; "have you heard or thought anything about it? I suppose you are too young. You seem to have had such wide experience of life in some ways that I wondered if you had ever come in touch with it."

"Oh, yes, sir," answered the boy, "I've heard a lot about it, ever since I was a little kid—before I knew what it meant. I have a good many friends in it. I've been to some of their meetings."

"Indeed," and the Admiral looked rather disturbed. "Well, what is your opinion of them?"

Glenn frowned thoughtfully for a minute.

"I'll tell you, Admiral," he said slowly; "I haven't got words to explain just the way I feel about it, but seems to me it's part wrong and part right, the way the Socialists work it, and seems to me if folks really understood each other—the rich folks and the poor folks, the little ones and the big ones, the smart ones and the slow ones, there wouldn't be any need of Socialists. Seems to me it's something like Eddy Kopp and me settling about our newspaper routes. He thought I was trying to do him out of his chance because he was new, and I thought he was trying to grab what belonged to me, and come to find out when we sat down one each side of Mr. Bergstein (that's the big cop, and he knows German and English both), and he heard both sides and explained my talk to Eddy and his to me, we got it all settled in fifteen minutes, and there was room enough for both of us. Seems to me this country needs more folks that can see both sides."

"Ah," said the Admiral, "I think I've heard something like that said before."

"Oh, I reckon I haven't thought up anything new," laughed Glenn; "but say, Admiral, there's something you can do that I'll bet you've never thought of, or you'd have done it long ago. I was speaking to Mr. Jack about it yesterday, and he said I'd better mention it to you when I had a good chance."

"Ah," said the Admiral again. He had begun to notice that Jack made a great many opportunities for throwing the boy and his grandfather into each other's company. "Very well, this is what Jack would undoubtedly call a good chance; there is no one to disturb us."

"It's like this, Admiral," said Glenn leaning forward eagerly. "It's a long walk from Potterville to Beaumont Corners by the road, but by the river it's not more than half as long. And the trees grow along the edge of the river, you know, but back of them there's a kind of a scrubby place, all the way along, between them and the woods, as far as your land goes; and below your land, way down to the first bridge in the town, there are fields or pastures stretching down to the river. Well, sir, as Mr. Jack and I said, if you'd let us boys and some of the town boys clear out the bushes

and things that don't amount to anything, there could be a path all along the edge of the river to what Mr. Jack calls your lower woods."

The Admiral nodded, as Glenn paused, evidently expecting some response. He was not by any means prepared to speak, being filled with a mixture of indignation and amazement.

"And then we could make a first-class picnic grove by trimming out a place in the woods," Glenn's eager voice went on, "and Saturday afternoons and Sunday afternoons all summer long, way from May till November, Mr. Jack says, that grove would be a grand place for the Potterville folks to sit and rest and get cool and watch the sky and the river. I think maybe the General would give a couple of boats when he knows about it; he likes to give things to folks. And Mr. Jack said it would be a boon—that's what he called it, Admiral. And of course the folks would be so pleased they'd be careful and not throw papers around, or make fires or anything like that. What do you think of it, Admiral?" asked the boy, for he had begun to realize that the old man's silence might bode ill for his plans.

"I'd like to know two things," said the Admiral drily. "First, who thought of this plan, and second,

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why any one should suppose I would for one moment wish to carry it out, or have it carried out ? ”

The boy's eyes were filled with wonder.

“ I reckon Mr. Jack and I thought of it together,” he said ; “ I reckon we did, but I think I was the one that spoke it out first. And—why, Admiral—anybody that's doing all you're doing for me—why, I thought you'd be awful glad to do it—honest I did—just as soon as you knew it could be done. And—and I asked Mr. Jack if he didn't think you'd let me patrol the grounds, picnic days, to see there wasn't any rubbish, and help look after the little kids so their fathers and mothers could rest and—don't you like it, Admiral ? ”

The old man looked at the little flushed face from which the big Irish eyes at once questioned and trusted him, and into his own eyes, held by the boy's, there came an expression which not even Nancy or Jack had ever seen there. He held out his hand to Glenn.

“ There's no doubt I shall like it—and a great many other things—before you've done with me, my lad,” he said as Glenn stood, waiting for his verdict. “ Now go and see if you can find Nancy and send her to me. Tell her there's something I wish to talk over with her.”

CHAPTER XIII

A ROADSIDE CALL

NANCY and Marguerite were riding out of Potterville, side by side, their horses close together, taking a leisurely gait, for the day was still warm although the sun was getting low. The two friends had been talking of Glenn and his plans and the surprising fact that the Admiral had not only agreed to them but was quite irritated with any one who ventured to raise the least objection on any grounds, whatever he might have said himself, in times past.

“He’s always worried about fire,” said Nancy; “always been afraid that a match might be dropped somewhere in the woods, or a cigar might be thrown away still lighted and set fire to the pine-needles, and so the woods might be burned. But when your father spoke of the possibility of fire, yesterday, Marguerite, did you hear what grandfather said?”

Marguerite nodded, smiling mischievously.

“Indeed I did,” she said; “he told father that the trouble was he didn’t have trust enough in people! Father! And mother’s always saying it’s a wonder to

her he isn't cheated every day of his life, because he's so ready to believe in everybody from the beggars on the street to the telephone operator when she tells him 'the line is busy' and he *knows* it isn't! I think it was pretty hard for father to bear that, Nancy."

"It would have been if he hadn't laughed," said Nancy. "Oh, Marguerite, you don't realize what a blessing you have in all being able to laugh, in your family, even when the joke is a little bit turned against you! Grandfather is amused by things, very often, and he has me read him books that he says are very witty, but he wouldn't have found anything to laugh about if he'd been in your father's place yesterday, I'm very sure."

"Father's an old dear," said Marguerite, "and he's as happy as he can be this summer to be in a camp, and with friends he's known so long, and to have the boys getting on so splendidly with their studies. He considers your brother Jack a very fine tutor, Nancy."

"Oh, thank you," said Nancy. "It does seem as if nobody could help learning with Jack for teacher."

"And then he's so good in athletics," Marguerite went on; "father is delighted about that. Ted has grown nearly half an inch taller since we came up here, and so has Roger. And another thing, father is very

much interested in Glenn. He thinks that boy has a future before him, Nancy—he told me so. When father got that long awful splinter in the palm of his hand the other day, he said Glenn took it out as if he'd been the best surgeon in the land, and then bandaged father's hand beautifully. Father said he wished Glenn might have been an army surgeon in his regiment."

"I think that's a splendid compliment," said Nancy. "And he told me that Glenn was doing finely with the target practice. I haven't ever seen him shoot, because I'm always reading to grandfather then, and I don't mind, for I'd rather not hear firing, ever; it makes me jump."

"So it does me," said Marguerite, "but I like to jump. When September comes they'll go hunting, they say—father and your brother and the boys—and then we'll have wild game, partridge and pigeons, and lovely wings for our winter hats, too."

Nancy's eyes were troubled, and the fingers of her right hand moved slowly back and forth on Jessie's silken mane.

"I'd rather never have any," she said in a low voice. "I hate to have birds killed, Marguerite. It seems as if they had as much right to live as you or I have,

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although grandfather says it is ridiculous for me to feel that way. Sometimes the shot doesn't even kill them at once, and they suffer, Marguerite !”

“I don't think it's ridiculous at all, Nancy dear,” said Marguerite warmly, “but I'm quite sure no boy would ever agree with you. Ted is perfectly wild for the hunting season to come—and you know Ted is not one bit cruel.”

“Oh, no,” said Nancy hastily, “no indeed ! Ted is a very kind boy. But ——”

“Now what is my little friend Miss Nancy Beaumont saying ‘but’ in such a sorrowful tone ?” came from the roadside, and the two children drew rein at the sight of Mr. Sigourney, who was seated at his ease on a camp-stool, eating blueberries from a heavily laden bush while at a little distance two blue gingham sunbonnets bobbed up and down, and there was the sound of two voices.

“We are having a home-road picnic, young ladies,” said Mr. Sigourney. “I am sorry I cannot remove my hat and make a sweeping bow, but to tell the truth I have mislaid it among these fascinating bushes. May I call your attention to the ladies of my party, hidden under those sunbonnets ? At present, viewed through the bushes, they look precisely alike, but I assure you

they are not; one has the honor to be my mother, while the other is your friend Miss Desdemona MacDonald. Will you dismount and join us? I can offer you a couple of very choice bushes."

"I'm afraid we mustn't stop, Mr. Sigourney," said Nancy, dimpling with laughter, "for we told grandfather we'd be home before dark. How do you do, Mona? Is this your first blueberrying?"

"My very first," said Desdemona, displaying a flushed face, and two indigo lips, as she came close to Jessie and held her pail up for Nancy to take some berries, while Mrs. Sigourney offered the same courtesy to Marguerite. "Haven't we had good luck? Just taste my berries, Nancy. To-morrow morning we are to have blueberry cake for breakfast—and I am to make it, by Mrs. Sigourney's best recipe. Think of that! I hope it won't be heavy as lead!"

"I'm sure it will be light as a feather," said Nancy, but Desdemona was not ready to take such a hopeful outlook.

"My cooking isn't usually," she said darkly. "Oh, Nancy, I've thought of a new instrument for our Kitchen Orchestra! Listen now, while I tell you about it, and see if you don't think it would be a great addition. I'm afraid there isn't time to do it for to-

morrow night, but if we have a concert, as your brother said we should, later on—you just listen now!”

Nancy listened and laughed and approved.

“I think you were very bright to have that idea, Mona,” she said cordially. “I’m sure the General would like to hear—no, to see it.”

“I think he’d like to *play* it,” said Desdemona, “and as long as we’ve tried to keep to-morrow night’s serenade a secret from him—though I’m pretty sure he suspects about it, only he doesn’t want to spoil our fun—but as long as it’s supposed to be a secret, I think I’ll save this idea, and tell it just to him, for a secret, so he can surprise his family when we give the concert. Don’t you think he’d be a splendid one to play it, being so big? And I can teach him to whistle whatever tunes Mrs. Carter decides on; he catches tunes so quickly—and then he could just appear at the concert! Wouldn’t it be fun, Nancy?”

“Yes, I think it would, if he’s willing, Mona,” said Nancy after a second’s hesitation. “Of course the General is a prominent man and he has a great deal of dignity in public, Jack says, and ——”

Desdemona waved all these objections out of sight with a sweep of her pail which sent a good many

berries flying, and drew the attention of Marguerite, to whom Mrs. Sigourney and her son had been talking.

"Is that a signal to tell us it's time for us to start, Mona?" asked Marguerite. "I suppose we must, Nancy, mustn't we?"

"Don't breathe it to a soul, Nancy," cautioned Desdemona, as she bent, pretending to straighten a fold of her friend's riding-skirt. "Do you suppose your grandfather would like to play? No, you needn't answer; I'd never dare ask him, anyway."

"I hope she wouldn't dare," thought Nancy a little anxiously, for she wished very much to have her grandfather like Desdemona, and felt quite sure that such a request would be far from pleasing to him. Fond as Nancy was of the Admiral she had always been a little afraid of rousing his displeasure, although she had braved it on some notable occasions, but this was not a case of necessity. As Desdemona released Nancy's skirt, she had whispered, "You can tell Marguerite, if she'll promise not to let it go any farther; she could help us plan;" and of this permission Nancy promptly availed herself.

"I hated to tell Mona your father might not like her asking him," said Nancy. "Grandfather and Jack have both told me he is a very important person,

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Marguerite, and perhaps he would not think it was proper for Mona to ask him," and Nancy looked rather distressed at the thought until Marguerite's laugh reassured her.

"Father! he'd love it!" cried the General's daughter. "You've never seen him down at the seashore, Nancy, taking part in a potato race, and all the other sports. Father says dignity is no good at all if a little fun interferes with it. He isn't a bit afraid of what any one says about him—ever, and he never has any reason to be," added Marguerite with decision. "Is Mona planning any instrument for your grandfather? Don't look so horrified, Nancy dear. I truly don't see why an admiral is any better than a general."

"Oh, it isn't that," said Nancy, "not at all, Marguerite; of course an admiral is no better than a general; it's only that grandfather is so different! Mona herself said she wouldn't dare ask him."

"Well—I don't believe she'd better," said Marguerite after some moments of thought. "I wouldn't *quite* dare to, myself."

Even the General's views coincided with theirs, when—the birthday serenade being safely over, and the members of the orchestra seated in the moonlight, with their instruments leaning against the trees—Desde

mona found an opportunity to speak to him. The General was supposed to be expressing special thanks to her for a little sketch she had made of Dick in his khaki suit, with his hand raised to his curly head, making a salute. In reality, after the first few words of thanks, the General was listening with growing amusement to her plans for his becoming a member of the Kitchen Orchestra. Once such a hearty laugh broke from him that the Admiral, half-way home, leaning on the arm of Sylvanus, stopped to listen.

"There's no mistaking that laugh," muttered the Admiral as he began again to climb the slope, leaning heavily on Sylvanus. "Ouch—that old pain! I can't do this again, in the night air, warm though it is."

"Seems as though there was a sound of pursuance, Adm'ral," said Sylvanus. "Don't you observe it, sah?"

"What," said the Admiral impatiently, but he stopped to listen again. "Why—yes—certainly some one is running after us. I hope nothing has happened. I hardly like the notion of Nancy's staying down in the woods all night, even so well protected. I doubt very much if her grandmother would have approved."

"'Tain't but a few minutes since we left her sitting

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right safe on a bench, Adm'ral," ventured Sylvanus. "Couldn't much happen in ——"

"*Anything* can happen in ten minutes," said the Admiral fiercely. "You talk without sense. Ah—well, my boy, what is it? What is it? Anything wrong?" as Glenn's little figure appeared in the moonlight, running.

"No, sir," he called before he reached the two who were waiting for him. "Oh, *no*, Admiral, everything is all right. 'Twas just—I kind of thought I'd like to go up to the house with you, and sit on the piazza for a minute, and see how it looks in the moonlight—the woods and everything. There's such a lot of them there, they won't miss me. I told Mr. Jack I was coming."

The Admiral bent his head and closely scrutinized the upturned face which the moonlight showed him clearly.

"You thought I'd be lonely, eh?" he questioned. "Wasn't that it?"

"I—I was feeling a bit lonely myself, Admiral," said the boy, not begging the question, but giving the old man's thought a twist while he spoke what was evidently the truth. "They're all awful good to me, but they all belong together somehow, and I don't be-

long with 'em, Admiral, not *exactly*—you know how 'tis. I don't belong anywhere really—not yet; but I'm going to, some time, and it'll be all thanks to you, Admiral. So I thought of something I'd like to tell you about and—did I scare you, Admiral? I'm awful sorry."

"Scare me!" echoed the Admiral. "No, of course not. But don't try running up-hill again as fast as that, yet a while. Wait till you're a bit stronger. Oh, yes, yes, I know you feel strong as ever, but take a little more leisurely gait, my boy, just to please me. And now we'll start again, Sylvanus. And we'll go rather slowly, so that my young friend can regain his breath. And when we reach the piazza, Glenn, there are things I shall wish to say to you. Even if I can't recall them all, it will make no difference. I'm an old man—an old man, Glenn, my boy, and I forget many things—but never my friends, old or young. Never my friends! We'll look out over the meadows together, and then neither of us need be lonely."

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRIZE WINNER

“DE Admiral cert’nly does take a powerful lot o’ int’reast in dat boy, my lamb,” said Aunt Sylvia the next afternoon, as she brushed and brushed Nancy’s hair which she had been washing.

Nancy had discovered early that morning that something was making Aunt Sylvia very sober, and it did not take the little girl long to find out exactly where the trouble lay ; she had, in fact, been afraid from the first that her old mammy’s jealousy would be roused when it came to Nancy’s spending a night in Wind-Away Lodge, under the care of Mrs. Dole. It had taken a good deal of coaxing, and a good many sighs over the dusty state of her hair, before Nancy could bring a smile to the black face and chase the somber look from the great dark eyes. But now Aunt Sylvia, cajoled and petted back to happiness, was in her element. From her station behind Nancy’s chair, in a sunny window, she looked down to a shady corner of the piazza where sat the Admiral and Glenn, close together.

“He cert’nly takes a pow’ful lot o’ int’reast in dat

boy," repeated Aunt Sylvia. "Las' night, honey, when I was gwine 'round seeing if eberyting was straight in de house, an' hunting up dat Julia Frost cat, so she wouldn't be sojering round, crying out and 'sturbing Mis' Gen'l Compton's headache, dere was dose two, sitting 'bout de same as dey is now, and talk, talk, talking, and laughing out, too—kind ob under dere breafs, honey, but 'twas sure fo' true laughing, all de same. Mos' an hour dey sat dere! I had to fotch 'Vanus awake fo' times, so's to hab him ready when de Admiral 'cided to go to bed! Ain' dat s'prising doings?"

"Yes, it is," said Nancy, "but, oh, it's very pleasant doings, too, Aunt Sylvia, for I was so afraid grandfather might feel lonely and a little bit left out of things, this summer, because he isn't strong enough to join in everything the way the General does. I've tried to think about him all the time—I mean, not to let him be alone—and now, sometimes he sends me off when I don't feel as if I ought to go, and when I come back, I'll find Glenn has been here, and grandfather hasn't had a minute's chance to be lonely, even if the General has been down in the camp writing letters, or off somewhere else."

"M-m," said Aunt Sylvia. "He's got consid'erable *reasoning* in his haid, dat boy. He kind ob reasons

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t'ings out, an' reasons 'em out de way he t'inks 'twould be good if dey *was*—an' den he sets to work an' makes 'em dat-a-way, near as he's able—an' dat's apt to be pretty near, honey. He's tooken notice ob de Admiral, an' he's tooken notice ob you, an' he's got a kind ob a system fo' securing you all de good times he t'inks you ought to hab. M-m. Yo' Aunt Sylvia knows. I gabe dat boy t'ree extry large big cookies yest'day. He don' know what for—but I knows. M-m ! ”

“ You dear Aunt Sylvia, I might have known you'd see just what a kind boy he is,” said Nancy gratefully. “ Everybody—even Mrs. Compton—thought it was an ‘experiment’ inviting him here to stay all summer, but it's turning out beautifully, isn't it ? ”

“ Got to hab 'speriments in dis worl' or else we don' get nowhar 'cepting whar we is at de start,” and Aunt Sylvia looked very wise. “ And speaking of 'speriments, honey, dar's two ob 'em coming right along pretty soon. De firs' one is dat Potterville picnic an' de Orchesrial Concert, an' de secon' one, dat'll come, come *befo'* de firs' one, 'less'n I's mightily mistooken, is a reg'lar rarin', tarin' downpour o' rain fo' two, three days—maybe fo', five days—maybe a whole week. How you t'ink dose Camp Wind-Away folks gwine take dat, eh ? ”

"Oh, Aunt Sylvia, what makes you think of such a thing?" asked Nancy, turning her head to look out on the sunlit meadows. "I can't see a cloud anywhere. And we've been having such lovely weather, day after day."

"Dat's why we got to hab de rain, honey," said Aunt Sylvia, gentle but relentless. "You don' want de crops all drying up in de groun', do you? Ob co'se you don't. An' de way I know de rain's coming is by my ole bones, honey; dey's been a-grinding an' a-grinding now fo' mos' two days. Somet'ing big's got to come out'n de clouds when my ole bones acts dat-a-way, dat's de truf."

"Oh, Aunt Sylvia, I wish I could do something to stop their aching," said Nancy. "I do wish I could! And grinding! that must be an awful pain! Just think, Aunt Sylvia, I haven't ever had any real pain in my life."

"Time enough, honey," said her old mammy, brushing the soft hair with swift, long strokes, and smiling to herself with pride as it gleamed like gold in the sun. "Plenty time fo' ole Pain to ketch you some day. Hope de good Lawd'll make it long time off."

"Thank you," said Nancy. "I hope He will, Aunt Sylvia, because He must know I'm not very brave."

"Huh!" and her mammy looked indignant. "Brave enough, you is! Don't talk like dat to yo' ole Aunt Sylvy, kase she knows. Dere's mo' t'ings dan pain to be brave 'bout, in dis trialsome worl'."

"Oh, I think it's a beautiful world," said Nancy. "Aunt Sylvia, isn't my hair pretty nearly dry so you and I could go for a little walk in the garden as soon as I'm dressed, and see how the ambrosia is coming on?"

It seemed a very beautiful world to Nancy that day, and it still seemed beautiful the next morning, when she woke to hear the steady drip, drip of the rain on the roof. Mrs. Compton was a little disturbed, not about the General who never paid the least attention to weather, or about Ted or Roger; but Dick was not quite as strong or as accustomed to being out in storms as the older boys. Marguerite had been persuaded by Mrs. Sigourney to spend the night before at the bungalow.

"I hope the tent doesn't leak," she said rather anxiously to Nancy at breakfast. "I shall be glad to hear Sylvanus's report when he comes back, for it must have rained very hard in the night, to judge from the way everything looks this morning. Shall you go down to the camp later in the morning, Nancy? Or is it too wet?"



SHE BLEW HER WHISTLE

"Oh, no, I love to go out in the rain," said Nancy, "though I know grown people don't, on account of their long skirts. Mrs. Carter says she always wishes she were a little girl again, when rainy days come."

"Long skirts are one of the bothers that grown people have to bear," and Mrs. Compton smiled across the table at the Admiral, who was not eating much breakfast.

"Yes," he replied absently. "I have no doubt that is true. Nancy, when you go down, will you say to Glenn that I have been thinking over the matter we talked of yesterday, and have decided to do as he suggested? Tell him when he is by himself, my dear."

In spite of herself, Nancy's eyes opened very wide, as she gave her promise. It was the first time she could remember her grandfather's having a secret with any young person except herself. Seeing her expression, the old man's eyes brightened, but he made no explanation.

Rosy cheeked and laughing, with the rain dripping from her oilskin coat and cap, Nancy ran down to the camp. She blew her whistle as she approached and heard not only the shrill sound made by the Compton boys and Glenn in reply, but two other unmistakable

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calls, one from Marguerite's little silver whistle, the counterpart of her own, and the other a wonderful trill from Desdemona's lips. Before she reached the end of the path she was met by two other little figures dressed exactly as she was.

"We got ahead of you," cried Desdemona, dancing up to her. "I am not to paint this morning, because it's so dark, and when Marguerite said she must come back and Mr. Sigourney said he'd bring her in his run-about, Mrs. Sigourney said Marguerite might wear her oilskin—isn't it lucky Mrs. Sigourney's so short?—and she thought we'd like the fun of walking. And we did, of course! The road is getting so nice and squishy, and there are puddles everywhere. Mrs. Sigourney's rubbers are a little bit large for Marguerite, so we tied them on, and one of the strings came untied, and I stepped on it and pulled off one rubber in one of the muddiest places, and Marguerite had to stand on one foot till I got it back for her. Nancy, what shall we do to-day? Because if you haven't any special plans I have one—here—in this bag," and she swung a long oilskin bag into view.

"I haven't any plans," laughed Nancy, "and that bag looks very interesting. What is in it, Mona?"

"Materials to make pictures, for all of you," said

Desdemona gaily. "Don't look so discouraged, Marguerite; you can make this kind of pictures, probably just as well as I can. Mr. Sigourney is coming, by and by, to act as judge, and I shouldn't be a bit surprised if one of you got the prize—I don't know what it's to be, so don't ask me."

By this time the three friends were at Wind-Away Lodge where Mrs. Dole greeted them soberly.

"Dubersome day, I calls dis," she announced, as they ran into the little living-room and threw off their coats, "an' de kind o' day whar ebery step makes a lot o' work," she added, as she surveyed the tracks on the floor, left by muddy rubbers. "I reckon I shan't hab no chance to sit down an' res' my bones, 'specially when de boys begins a-tromping in. I see 'em coming now. You keep 'em delaying at de do' jess a minute, Miss Nancy, till I mop up dese places, an' see if dey can' scrape off some ob de wet on de platform."

"Pine-needles don't make mud, Mrs. Dole," said Nancy, smiling at the sober face, and at last receiving a smile in return. "We'll keep the boys outside for a minute, and now we've taken off our rubbers we shan't muddy your lovely clean floor. I suppose it is pretty discouraging."

A little recognition of her trials was all Mrs. Dole

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ever required to raise her spirits. Now she looked at Nancy quite cheerfully.

"Not a mite o' use being discouraged," she announced, "and I's got de kind o' disp'sition dat raises hitself high above de storms, Miss Nancy. Fotch dose boys right in hyah, in two minutes."

Nancy had an opportunity to deliver her message to Glenn almost immediately. His eyes sparkled when he heard it, but he did not offer any explanation.

"I thought he would," was Glenn's only remark, in a tone of much satisfaction. "I'm going up to the house to see him by and by."

"Oh, Glenn, why don't you stay up at the house for dinner?" suggested Nancy eagerly. "It's your holiday, and grandfather would be delighted. He said I might stay down here for dinner if I liked, for Mrs. Compton will be there, and he thought the General would go, too. If you were going up that would make four at the table—three gentlemen for Mrs. Compton! But perhaps you'd rather not."

"I don't believe I'll go for dinner," said Glenn. "I haven't got the hang of all the table manners yet, but Mr. Jack's helping me. I'll tell you what—when dinner's over, the General will be taking his nap, and then I can talk to the Admiral. I'll go up then for a while.

He doesn't feel sleepy now till pretty near four o'clock ; then all he wants is just a few minutes' doze, and then he's wide awake as ever. It's different from what it was last year."

He reddened under Nancy's wondering eyes, and moved his foot back and forth over one of the boards in the floor.

"We talk about all kinds o' things, the Admiral and I," said Glenn. "I tell him, and he tells me. We're awful good chums."

"I know you are," said Nancy warmly, "and I'm glad as I can be about it, Glenn. Oh, Mona's opening her bag !"

They all crowded around Desdemona, as she opened the bag and spread its contents on the table. There were displayed four small boxes of water color paints, and eight little brushes. Beside these were a good many sheets of white paper, cut into pieces six inches square.

"Now all we need is four or five cups or dishes of water," said Desdemona, as the company silently eyed the articles spread before them. "Well, perhaps eight things to hold water would be better, because although two people can use the same paint-box all right, each one really needs a cup to use alone."

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"Am I going to play this game?" asked Dick, who sometimes found himself excluded by reason of his age, or lack of it.

"Indeed you are," Desdemona assured him. "I counted on you; and on you, too," she added as Jack came over the threshold.

"But what are we to do with the paints, Mona?" asked Marguerite, remembering her one lesson in sketching from nature.

"First, we'll clear the table," said Desdemona, and at once began the work by setting a pile of books on the floor and depositing a work-bag on the lounge. "Then we must all draw up to it, and then I'll divide the sheets of paper among us. I think there are five for each of us. Oh, first we'd better get Mrs. Dole to give us the cups and dishes for the water."

After a good deal of laughter they were at last all seated around the big table, and ready for further instructions.

"Divide your square of paper into three parts, cross-wise," said Desdemona. "You don't need to be very exact about it—only get the thirds pretty nearly equal. Here, Dick, I'll mark yours for you with this little pencil, just lightly, so it won't show after the paint is on. Now the middle third is to be brushed with

clear water, so!" and Mona illustrated on her own square, while the others quickly followed her example.

"Get it pretty damp," said Desdemona, "and while you're doing it decide what colors you'll spread on, good and wet, for the top third, and what ones for the lower third. I'm going to mix green and blue and brown for my lower third—that's the earthy part—and red and white and yellow for the upper third—that's the sky part."

She was mixing the colors and drawing her brush across the paper as she talked, making broad, wet bands.

"And now," she said, taking her square from the table and holding it first by one corner and then another, "you tip it this way, and that way, and every way, back and forth, and the colors will run over the clear water space, and begin to make queer shapes. See? Don't those look—like—trees?" she asked, as by a quick twist she sent a thick stream of green paint running up toward the sky. "Shake it, or do anything you like with it, *except*, you mustn't touch it with your brush after you begin to make the picture by tipping it; that's the principal rule of the game. Then when the picture is done you must name it. I've brought a lot of thumb-tacks, so we can put all the pictures on

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the wall, and have our exhibition ready when Mr. Sigourney comes. He said he'd be here at twelve, and 'if deeply needed and warmly urged,' maybe he'd be persuaded to stay to dinner."

"I'm sure we shall need him," said Marguerite, "and we'll urge him, too, shan't we, Nancy?"

"Indeed we will," said Nancy, heartily. "Mona, do we have a certain length of time for our sketches or may we take as long as we like to do them?"

"Why, if we are to have an exhibition, and get it ready for Mr. Sigourney by twelve o'clock, we must have some time limit, I suppose," said Desdemona. "How do you think we'd better manage it, Mr. Jack?"

"It is now half-past ten," said Jack, consulting his watch. "I should say we might paint—if this entertainment is called painting—until half-past eleven, each one doing as many sketches as possible. The naming them will take some minutes, if I'm not mistaken, and it will certainly require a quarter of an hour to hang the exhibition to the best advantage. I am ready to begin now. May I share your paint-box, Nancy?"

Nothing could have pleased Nancy better. She was examining the paints with much interest, considering their possibilities.

“All ready!” called Desdemona. “One, two, three—I’ve begun.”

There never was anything much funnier than the Art Exhibition at which Mr. Sigourney gazed with an unmoved face, but which sent Nancy and Marguerite into spasms of laughter, and at which the boys roared. Such skies, such rivers and ponds, such trees, shrubs and grasses surely were never seen before. It took Mr. Sigourney a long time to decide on the prize picture, but at last he chose it.

The name printed under it was “Camp Wind-Away,” and its blue and crimson vegetation bore no resemblance to any growth known to nature or science. Mr. Sigourney pointed to it, solemnly.

“I have wavered in my choice,” he said, “between these two charming bits entitled respectively ‘Midnight’ and ‘Over the Seas,’ both of which are of the impressionist school and offer great opportunities for conjecture. But here, in this sketch I have at last chosen as prize-winner, there is more of that direct appeal to the heart, in the title, than is to be found in either of the other two pictures, attractive though they are. I therefore have the pleasure of awarding the prize to the artist of number fourteen, ‘Camp Wind-Away.’ Will he or she kindly step forward?”

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In his hand he held the prize—a huge soda biscuit, on the round face of which, in pink frosting, were lettered the words “Prize Winner.” He turned it so that all the competitors might see, and then smiled down at the eager little face of Dick, first artist of Camp Wind-Away, crimson with delight.

CHAPTER XV

THE BEAUMONT FORESTRY LEAGUE

WHEN the boys heard the plans for making a path along the river's edge from the upper bridge at Potterville to the woods just below the Camp Wind-Away Grove, they were all filled with enthusiasm.

"I don't see why we can't organize a Forestry Association," said Ted to Jack. "I'm sure we can get enough boys to help us to make a good-sized Association, don't you think so? I spoke to Mr. Lamson about it yesterday when Glenn and I met him in Potterville, and then I made Glenn tell him our plans, and he said he knew a dozen boys that would like nothing better than to help clear out underbrush. And he says he'll put a little notice in *The Clarion* every few days, to tell how the work is progressing, and 'keep our ambition at white heat.' He thinks it's a great scheme."

"All right," said Jack cordially; "hunt up your boys with Mr. Gleason's help, and invite them to come here day after to-morrow—Saturday—to talk over what we plan to do. I've already secured permission from the

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farmers whose land runs down to the river to have the path run across their fields or meadows. They're all ready to contribute a little strip of land for the benefit of the town."

The next Saturday fourteen boys were carried to Camp Wind-Away in Mr. Hobbs's barge, and by four o'clock that afternoon, the Beaumont Forestry League was organized and ready for work which they decided should begin that very day, to be continued each succeeding Saturday until the path was finished, or rather until the way for it was cleared, for the path itself would be made not by hands and the work of the newly-organized league, but by the eager feet of Potterville's men, women and children. Jack thought it might be "ready for treading" by the latter part of August, and it was voted to let the picnic wait until the path could be used.

"There'll be lots of folks come, if they can walk, that would have to stay at home if they'd got to pay somebody to drive 'em here; won't there be a lot that couldn't come except by walking?" Glenn asked one of the Potterville boys, changing his statement to a question.

"About two-thirds of those that will be crazy to come couldn't afford to pay a cent to get here," said

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the boy promptly. He was a son of Mr. Hobbs, the livery-stable keeper, and well posted on such matters.

"Before we begin to work, Mr. Jack, don't you think we'd better kind of line up in front of the Admiral and salute him?" Glenn asked the president of the league. "He and the General are playing chess out on the piazza; at least that's where they were when Nancy came down to camp a few minutes ago, for I asked her."

Jack laughed and looked down at Glenn with instant understanding.

"You're a pair of plotters—you two," he said. "Between you, I notice my grandfather is well looked out for. We'll take a march up to the house and salute the Army and Navy, by all means. Attention, members of the Beaumont Forestry League. Fall in line, for a short march to the house, before field work begins."

"Come," said Nancy to Marguerite, who was swinging in a hammock, with her eyes half shut, looking very lazy and comfortable, "come, Marguerite; if we run we can get there before the boys, and see their salute! They can't march as fast as we can run. Come!"

Marguerite was drowsy when they began to run, but wide awake long before they reached the piazza, flushed and laughing.

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"Oh, Nancy," she cried as they came in sight of the house and slackened their pace to a gentle trot, "I wish I didn't weigh any more than you do! Or else I wish you weighed as much as I do, so you couldn't fly over the ground the way you do. You make me feel as if you were a butterfly and as if I were a—a rhinoceros or some very heavy animal! And I'm not so terribly fat, either."

"Poor Marguerite!" said Nancy penitently, and she put her arm around her friend's waist. "I ought to be ashamed not to remember you don't enjoy running. Of course you're not a bit fat; you're just plump."

"Thank you," said Marguerite. "I will forgive you, Nancy, and never mention it again. Here we are at last."

"Nancy, I'd like to have you step here," said the Admiral chuckling. "Step up here, my dear, and see the position in which I've put the General."

"Marguerite, you step this way," said the General briskly, and when his daughter reached his side, he pulled her head down and whispered something in her ear.

"Come, come," said the Admiral, looking keenly at his old friend. "You think you've got me in a corner, eh? Play on, sir; it is your move."

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Just what would have happened Nancy and Marguerite never knew, for at a sudden shrill sound, the General turned so quickly that his elbow hit the chess board and it was overturned.

"Aren't you thankful?" Marguerite whispered to Nancy as they rescued knights and kings from their precarious situations over cracks in the piazza.

"Indeed I am," whispered Nancy, "for they both wished so much to beat, and they couldn't, *both*. The boys came at exactly the right time."

The boys were all whistling "Dixie" as they came up the slope, with Jack at their head, marching two by two, little Dick occasionally taking a hop, skip and jump to get in step again with Glenn whose marching mate he was. The Admiral looked at them in pleased surprise.

When the procession reached the piazza, it stretched itself across the lawn, and each boy's right hand went up to his cap.

"The Beaumont Forestry League presents its respects to the distinguished officers and wishes to state that it is ready for action," called Jack in a ringing voice.

"Well, well," said the Admiral and the General together, greatly pleased, and again, after a moment, as if they had rehearsed the words, "Well, well!"

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"Any orders?" inquired Jack in a less official tone, while the boys dropped their hands, and all grinned cheerfully.

"You seem to be doing very well without any," said the Admiral. "I trust the league will meet with no insuperable obstacles on the field of its battles, eh, General?"

"That would be my wish," said the General gravely. "The officer in command seems a very competent person."

"He does," said the Admiral, and when at Jack's word the little company wheeled, formed in procession again and marched off down the slope to the woods, whistling "The Girl I Left Behind Me," the Admiral's eyes followed his grandson wistfully.

"He would have been an ornament to your profession, my friend," said the old man to General Compton.

"Yes," said the General, "he would, but he'll be an ornament to the legal profession he tells me he intends to take up."

"Yes," admitted the Admiral, "he will. You may recall the portrait of his great uncle, Judge Beaumont, which hangs in the library."

"Certainly," said the General, "fine old fellow with a pair of very remarkably brilliant eyes."

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“That is the one,” said the Admiral. “I wonder—have I ever told you the story of the first case he won—the case which made him famous when he was only twenty-six years of age?”

It was a warm afternoon and the General had been thinking it would be pleasant to go up into the cool, shady room where his wife sat, waiting for him; but he looked at Nancy’s burning cheeks and her blue eyes, unconsciously pleading for her grandfather.

“What if I have heard it a few dozen times?” thought the General.

He smiled at Nancy and turned to his old friend with an unruffled brow, before the pause became embarrassing.

“It sounds as if it would be a very interesting story,” said the General, “and one that would well bear repeating even if you had happened to tell it to me before. Let me get settled in my armchair—there! Now for the story of Judge Beaumont and his first case. Begin at the very beginning, my friend.”

CHAPTER XVI

MRS. CARTER'S SECRET

NANCY, Marguerite and Desdemona sat on the little platform which served as a piazza for Wind-Away Lodge.

"Listen!" said Marguerite, holding up one finger. "Did you ever hear anything stiller than this place, in all your life?"

"Way up in the very tops of the pines there's a little rustling," said Nancy softly, when they had sat in silence for fully three minutes. "And there's a squirrel, and there's a woodpecker. But they're all very still sounds."

"There's a locust," said Desdemona in a tone which indicated that she found no delight in his song. "That isn't what I call a very still sound. Isn't it sizzling hot? I'm glad all the people in our apartment house are away, so mother can stay out in the park all day if she likes."

They were still again for a few moments after that; then Nancy put her hand over her mouth, a minute more and Marguerite did the same thing; another

minute and Desdemona's fingers were not quite quick enough to cover a yawn.

"There ! we've all done it," she said. "It's just because it's so still and warm. The Beaumont Forestry Leaguers must be pretty tired, working out in the sun, this hot afternoon. But at any rate they're doing something. We are just sitting here, yawning."

"They are working in a shady place to-day, Mona," said Nancy, "and Jack says two more Saturdays will finish the path. Don't you think it would be nice if we had a league and invited some of the girls to come from Potterville on Saturday afternoons while the boys are making the path ? They could come here to the camp the next two Saturdays, and then the third Saturday we could ask them to come early and help us get ready for the picnic. Aunt Sylvia thinks it would be a very good idea. And Mrs. Carter would help us entertain them. She told me yesterday she'd love to do it."

"How will your friend Mrs. Potter feel ?" inquired Desdemona. "And how shall we entertain them the next two Saturdays, Nancy ?"

"I don't believe Mrs. Potter would mind," said Nancy, "for you know she said last Saturday when she came out with Mr. Potter that every Saturday

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afternoon in summer she took her husband off to see some of his relations. Don't you remember she said he had so many that they lasted all summer?"

"I remember," said Marguerite. "She told me they were 'slighty folks,' and she had to be very careful not to offend them by going oftener to see one than another."

"So you see she couldn't come, Mona," said Nancy; "she has promised to come to the picnic, and that will take another Saturday afternoon."

"She'll have to look out for those 'slighty' relatives," said Desdemona, "but you haven't told me what we'll do to entertain the girls, Nancy."

"I think Mrs. Carter will be certain to have some splendid idea," said Nancy. "Marguerite and I can ride in to Potterville Monday and see her. Wouldn't you like to do that, Marguerite?"

"Oh, yes," said her friend easily. "I'd just as soon. I admire Mrs. Carter very much, and beside that, father says it's excellent discipline for me to have to play second fiddle occasionally."

"There isn't any first fiddle if you are the second one, Marguerite," and Nancy looked a little troubled. "I love Mrs. Carter, but she's grown up, and you're my very ownest friend."

"You dear thing," and Marguerite hugged her on the spot. "I didn't mean *you* made me play second fiddle. Isn't she stupid, Mona? Stupid but sweet!"

Desdemona's chin was uptilted and her face had assumed a very melancholy look, though her eyes, hidden under her long lashes, were full of mischief.

"Were you speaking to me?" she inquired in an injured tone. "I thought you had forgotten I was here. In another minute I should have begun to whistle 'Forsaken.' It's an old folk-song that Mr. Sigourney has taught me, and he calls it 'a very moving piece.' We whistle it together sometimes when Mrs. Sigourney says we really don't deserve any dinner for being so much behind time, when we've been painting hard all morning. She always begins to laugh before we've finished it—and then we have something specially good for dinner, like shortcake or hot gingerbread or waffles."

Nancy and Marguerite each put an arm through Desdemona's and assured her that they had not really forgotten her for one moment, or at least—with Desdemona's mischief-filled eyes on them—not for more than one moment; so she agreed to forgive them both.

On Monday when Nancy and Marguerite had ridden

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into Potterville, and up to the Carter house, they found Mrs. Carter on the piazza, reading a book with a very listless air which vanished when she saw her two young visitors.

“I’ve been skipping page after page,” she cried, springing to her feet and greeting them with outstretched hands. “It is supposed to be a very clever book, but I have found it stupid. You little dears! Your faces are full of something interesting! Do tell me what it is.”

They told her, antiphonally, like a Greek chorus, and she listened delightedly.

“I know the very thing,” she said, when the recital was finished. “You’ll want ever and ever so many cushions for the tired mothers to rest their heads on, and for the little tots to sit on—some of them, at least. I’ll take Mrs. Potter with me some morning this week down to the mill, and we’ll choose a lot of ‘mill-end’ cottons—the pieces that are left from regular lengths, you know. Mr. Carter has fitted up a little room close to his office for me to go whenever I feel like it; sometimes I carry down a luncheon for him, and we have it on the table in my little room, and call it a picnic. I’ll get him to have a great basket of the mill-ends carried there, and then Mrs. Potter and I will

look them over and choose what we wish. We'll take all the pretty, fast colors."

Her eyes wore the look they always had when she was planning something; Nancy had learned to know the look; she nodded at Marguerite, as they sat, one on each side of their hostess, in big wicker chairs, to signify that Mrs. Carter would explain, all in good time, her connection between mill-ends and entertaining their Saturday guests.

"I'll provide the materials and stuffing for the cushions," Mrs. Carter went on after a little pause, "and it will mean that I shall be happily rid of a lot of old feather pillows that are up in the garret now. I'll have Louise make stout cotton covers, and fill them with the feathers. We'll have some big cushions and some little ones. Then, don't you see, Nancy and Marguerite, we and all the Potterville girls you invite for the next two Saturdays will make the outside covers. We could surely do three apiece each afternoon; that would make—how many girls will there be, Nancy?"

"I think about ten," said Nancy, after pondering for a minute. "There are nine girls I know better than any of the others, and then there's that dear little 'Car'line' who carried the bottle of spring water to the station for me to drink while I was on the freight

car. She's younger than the others, but I'd love to have her come."

"Come! Indeed we wouldn't have her left out for anything," said Mrs. Carter warmly. "We'll all ride out together in Mr. Hobbs's barge, and I'll have little Car'line sit beside me. And there's another part to our entertainment, Nancy. Come closer, both of you, while I tell you something I saw once, and then we'll plan how we can do it even better. And then, when I've told you, shall I have my horse brought around and shall we all three go together to give the invitations? May I go, too?"

"We'd love to have you!" cried Nancy and Marguerite together with unmistakable heartiness, as they drew their chairs very close to Mrs. Carter's.

"Perhaps we'd best go first to Mrs. Potter," suggested Nancy, and Mrs. Carter put her hand over her little friend's and held it there for a moment.

"We'd best go first to Mrs. Potter's, of course, you little bunch of tact," she said affectionately; "but what I'm going to tell you now must be a surprise to her, and to everybody else, except dear Aunt Sylvia. Ah, Nancy is glad to hear that exception."

"Yes, I am," said Nancy with a little sigh of content. "It just makes everything *perfect*, Mrs. Carter!"

CHAPTER XVII

AT THE RIVER PATH

DURING all the happy, busy weeks at Camp Wind-Away, there had been scarcely a day on which Glenn had not visited Pirates' Rock. The place had an odd fascination for him, which the boy could not explain, even to himself. It was not all owing to the story Nancy had told, or the many other tales he had since heard from the Admiral, Jack and Aunt Sylvia. Always, as he sat on the old ledge or walked around it, Glenn had a queer feeling that Pirates' Rock was hiding something.

He had carefully examined every foot of the stone, hunting for a possible entrance to the little cave, so effectually sealed by the rock wedged in its former opening.

"Better not meddle wid de work ob de Lawd," Aunt Sylvia had admonished him one day, when she had heard him tell the Admiral how he had hunted in vain. "When de lightning an' de t'under flung dat rock in de hole, 'twas so dat pirates' works done in de

night would be covered up safe, whar dey couldn' do no harm."

"All right, Aunt Sylvia," said Glenn merrily. "I can't meddle with the cave, because I can't get at it—but I'd like to, first rate. I'd like to see if there's anything in there that would be any good for the Admiral or Nancy. They might blast the rock, but you see if they did, whatever's in there might get blown out of sight; so it's no use trying that."

"Praise be!" said Aunt Sylvia fervently. "If you want to please de Adm'ral, boy, you put on one of dose white collars I give you las' week, all fresh from de iron. De Adm'ral, he jess endures dese Camp Wind-Way flannel collars dat ain' really collars 't all, but he 'spises 'em. You dress up once in a while, no matter if you ain' so comf'table."

"All right," said Glenn with his wide smile. "I sure will, Aunt Sylvia," and he was as good as his word.

Jack tried to laugh Glenn out of his notions about the old rock, and before long the boy stopped talking about it, except once in a while, to Nancy. Together they made up some marvelous tales for their own amusement, weaving romances made up of buried treasure and phantom ships, with old Pirate Kildare as the

central figure. Glenn had told stories to other children ever since he could talk, and he had a vivid imagination and fluent tongue, which were gifts from his Celtic forebears, while Nancy had absorbed legends and fairy stories from the time she was old enough to understand anything. They were little kindred spirits, these two children, spite of all differences in ancestry and upbringing.

Glenn was as well now as he had ever been, and his wiry strength, quite out of proportion to his size, was a constant surprise to the other boys and a source of un-failing admiration, as well.

"You can chop longer than I can, without getting tired," said Ted, when they were resting one Saturday afternoon, between two stretches of work. "And you don't weigh as much as I do, by ten pounds."

"I can't run as fast as you do," said Glenn, whose eyes were ever turned to some mark he had not reached. "What's chopping? But say, Ted, I've grown another quarter inch. Wait till we get back to camp and I'll show you."

"When we go hunting in September, you'll be way ahead of me then, I know," said Ted. "You're twice as good a shot as I am, now. What's the matter?"

A strange expression had crossed Glenn's face; one

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which Ted had never seen before and could not understand ; it was almost like fear—yet he knew Glenn was not afraid of anything. His courage and daring were a byword in the camp.

“ Nothing’s the matter,” said Glenn slowly. “ Only, maybe I shan’t go hunting with you.”

“ Not go hunting ! ” cried Ted, but at that moment Jack gave the whistle that called them back to work, and, whether by Glenn’s intention, or by chance, the boys were separated, and before they came together again Ted’s mind, always easily diverted, had turned to other things, and Glenn’s remark had been forgotten for the time.

There was, indeed, enough to drive it effectually from Ted’s mind, for the path—the long, tree-shaded, river-edged, winding path—was almost finished. A few hours more of work, with a little “ skilled labor ” from Potterville, bespoken by the General—and the path lay, a lovely, completed link, between the smoke-laden, hot little mill village and the beautiful, pine-scented air of Beaumont Grove. The work of the Beaumont Forestry League was over, and two of Potterville’s boys, with a final flare of ambition, walked proudly back to the upper bridge, tired but well content.

Half an hour before, the barge from Hobbs’s livery

stable, Mr. Hobbs himself handling the reins, had set down at the end of the Carters' driveway its load of little girls and Mrs. Carter, as young and excited as any of them. The second Saturday afternoon at Wind-Away Lodge was over, but gleaming brightly before them was the prospect of the third Saturday—the day on which Beaumont Grove was to be opened; as a weekly privilege it would forever after be free to the people of Potterville. And as the inauguration of this new delight there was to come the picnic, for which all Potterville was preparing, and concerning which each little girl had one secret which must be kept, in spite of all temptations to divulge it, seven days longer! Not quite seven whole days, however, for it was now nearly six o'clock, and the picnic was to begin at two. When it is a question of keeping a secret, even four hours' reprieve is well worth considering.

“I never had such a good time in my life before, really I never did,” cried Mrs. Carter, running up on the piazza where her husband sat awaiting her with a whimsical smile. “And best of all, to think *I* have a secret that nobody is to know!”

“Nobody?” queried her husband with raised eyebrows.

“Nobody but you,” she answered with a little laugh,

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“and you and I don't count for more than one, do we?”

“I hope not,” said Mr. Carter, “and this afternoon I've been a lonesome half of one. May I hear the secret now?”

“You may,” and the dark eyes smiled at him. “I couldn't have kept it much longer, anyway. I feel like a little girl myself, to-day. Listen!”

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PICNIC

NEVER had there been a lovelier day at Beaumont Corners than the Saturday set for the picnic. The Admiral, Aunt Sylvia, Sylvanus, and Mrs. Siren Dole had all watched the wind and sky for two days with anxiety, but there was no further need for it when Saturday came. A deep blue sky, fleecy clouds, and a straight west wind—what more could the most exacting picnicker ask?

The morning was all too short for the plans which filled the hearts and minds of Potterville housekeepers. When the whistle sounded from the big cotton mill, at noon, to show that work was over, out trooped the men and women, boys and girls, eager to be done with dinner and start for their pleasuring. There was scarcely a family which was not contributing at least one member to the picnic. Many of them were going all together, from the father and mother down to the newest baby. And all the other Potterville homes were sending representatives. Even Mr. Carter had promised his wife to drive out to the grove that after-

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noon, about four o'clock, taking with him two guests who had come to visit his wife for a few days. There was a little mystery about these guests. They had not arrived at Potterville station, but had been met by Mr. and Mrs. Carter with their automobile at a station some miles away. Even Nancy had not been told their names when the picnic day came.

"Mr. Carter will bring them out with him," Mrs. Carter had said, absent-mindedly. "You'll meet them, then. This seemed to be the best time for them to come, and I knew they'd be welcome. There come Mr. and Mrs. Potter, Nancy, and we haven't any too much time to do the things we must do before any one else arrives."

Nancy, Marguerite and Desdemona with Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Compton and Mrs. Potter to direct them, flew about like little sprites for the next hour. At the end of that time, just before the clock in the General's tent struck the hour of two, and he offered his arm to his old friend the Admiral, the three little girls appeared at the gap in the wall between Camp Wind-Away and the path that led to Beaumont Grove, with their allies behind them and announced:

"Everything is ready! Everything is *rea-dy*! Come!"



“EVERYTHING IS READY”

After this chorus, with a call from Nancy's and Marguerite's silver whistles, and a final trill from Desdemona's throat, the young people ran back to the grove and stood waiting for their guests.

"We'd better not have it very formal, my dear," the Admiral had said to Nancy, after a long talk with Glenn. "The General and I will speak to them, of course, but just at first they will feel more at ease to see only you young people, perhaps, with Mrs. Compton, who has great tact, and Mrs. Carter whom they all know and admire; and Mrs. Potter," he added, "who is in a way one of them, although a woman of rather unusual abilities and gifts, if I may use the word."

Nancy knew well enough that none of the members of the Potterville Woman's Club would have relished her grandfather's kindly meant words. With the best intentions in the world, the old Admiral was unable to get in close touch with most of the townspeople. In spite of herself Nancy was glad for her grandfather's decision.

"They all know us children," she had said, "and perhaps they will feel a little less strange with us, just for the first few minutes."

It was only a quarter after two when the first pic-

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nickers arrived. To Nancy's joy the shy little face of her special pet, "Car'line" Spencer, was the first to appear, as the child, seeing Nancy, ran forward, leaving her father and mother to follow.

"I didn't know but we'd get here ahead o' time," said Mrs. Spencer as she shook hands with Mrs. Compton. "I've had to lag a little, not to be too far ahead of all the rest o' the folks. Car'line started us full early. But I see Mr. Lord and Bartley Pearson are pretty close behind. There they come now."

"These are great doings," said Mr. Pearson, before he had greeted any of the company. "Great doings, I must say! The Adm'ral's come out o' his shell for good an' all, and took the populace right into it, hasn't he, now?"

"Oh, Mr. Pearson, I'm so glad to see you again," said a cool little voice at his ear, and the postmaster turned to meet the dancing eyes of Desdemona. "Come over here with me, won't you, please? I want to introduce you to one of my favorite places in the grove. Mrs. Sigourney is there, now."

"Pleased to accompany you," said Mr. Pearson. "I've been wanting to meet up with Mis' Sigourney, all summer. She must've had consid'able trials with you two painting folks on her hands."

“Oh, Mr. Pearson, how unkind!” said Desdemona, as she led her prize to a place of safety just in time to avoid a collision with the Admiral, who at that moment entered the grove. “You almost hurt my feelings.”

Close on the heels of the first-comers followed the long procession of picnickers, all so heartily welcomed that the shyest and most silent felt at ease.

“Won’t you put your baskets down on one of the tables?” Nancy said to them all when she had shaken hands and told them how glad she was to see them. “Mr. Potter had those splendid strong tables made for us, so the baskets need never be put on the ground until supper time; and they’ll be useful to play games on, too. Then, wouldn’t you like to walk about and see the grove? Or sit down if you’d rather.”

Some of them walked about for a while, many seated themselves at once on the soft, pine-needle-covered ground. Had it not been for the Admiral’s imposing figure, Nancy felt sure many of them would have stretched their full length, with joy. As it was, Glenn led a number of the boys to a half-hidden corner of the grove where they might kick up their heels without fear of giving offense. And Glenn entertained them; there was no doubt about that. They asked him questions without stint, for a city boy who had led a life

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so full of strange experiences had never come their way before.

Glenn answered everything they asked without the least self-consciousness, and in return they told him many things about themselves, and Glenn listened with the greatest interest to details about the mill, the dry-goods store and the *Potterville Clarion*, for which two of the boys served as carriers.

"It's just the way that doctor at the hospital said it was," Glenn thought as he listened. "There's most every kind of person in every place, no matter how small 'tis."

"Hi! there!" he cried suddenly straightening up, and giving a shrill whistle. "Did you hear that call? That's Mona Macdonald, and it means it must be half-past four; something's going to happen, but I don't know what. Come on, let's find out."

The boys trooped after their leader, but when they got back to the center of the grove where the picnickers were gathered, there was nothing to be seen of Desdemona, nor of Nancy and Marguerite. Mrs. Carter also had vanished, and Glenn looked in vain for Aunt Sylvia.

"Where are all our folks, I wonder?" he thought, but at that moment he saw two familiar little figures,

one standing at each side of the Admiral to whom they were talking together, while he turned his head from one to the other as partially as he could.

“Why, Miss Mary and Miss Althea! Where’d you come from? My, but I’m mighty glad to see you!” cried Glenn, and the Misses Hartshorn turned from the Admiral to greet him with pink cheeks and little gray curls bobbing with excitement.

“Why, King Arthur Donovan, how brown you’ve grown!” said Miss Mary.

“And how tall and broad-chested!” said Miss Althea. “Sister, I never saw a greater change in any boy, did you?”

“Never,” agreed Miss Mary. “It’s through our kind new friend Mrs. Carter that we’re here, as a surprise to our old friends the Comptons, and to dear little Nancy and the Admiral. We’ve shut the shop for one week. If we lose custom by it—and sister and I are prepared for the worst—it cannot be helped. We’ve not had an outing, away from business, for many, many years.”

“Too many to count, sister,” said Miss Althea briskly. “Mr. Carter, didn’t your wife tell us to listen for a bird call, and don’t you hear one?”

“I do,” said Mr. Carter; “she said we were to go where the bird called us. Come, everybody!” and he

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turned to the groups behind, who had all begun to listen to the wonderful bird call.

"Where's Car'line?" asked Mrs. Spencer who had been taking a nap. "She ought to hear that bird—if 'tis a bird."

"It's one kind of a bird," said Glenn flashing his smile at the mother of little Car'line. "I guess we'll all see it in a minute."

The bird seemed to call them to a place where small trees stood thickly together, but Mr. Carter, who seemed to have received some private information, lifted from the ground one small tree, as Jack Beaumont lifted another close to it, and there appeared a short path which led into a wide clearing. In the very center of this clearing sat Aunt Sylvia in a big rocking-chair with little Car'line in her lap, while around her, on piles of bright-hued cushions, were seated eleven other girls; their eyes turned resolutely away from the picnickers who came thronging in through the gap, and were fastened on Aunt Sylvia's face.

Aunt Sylvia's eyes were shut, as she rocked to and fro, humming a little tune to herself.

"'Pears like hit's mos' time fo' de nightingale to come roun' wid dat purty song o' his," Aunt Sylvia said at last, stopping her humming. "'Long as he ain't hyah,

I's got to sing a little myself, honey. I's gwine call him now f'om whar he's hiding. I reckon dat'll fetch him.

“ Oh, de nightingale am swingin’
On de bough, an’ singin’, singin’,
Like he’d split his little t’roat in two.
'Bout de summer moon he’s tellin’
An’ his little heart am swellin’
Wid his joy ; he’s singin’, singin’ jess for you.”

It was a crooning melody, so easily caught that Glenn could scarcely keep from humming it when, as Aunt Sylvia stopped, the eleven little figures on the cushions began to hum, rocking back and forth, their arms folded, their faces looking down as if each small right shoulder pillowed a baby's head.

“ They're doing that right in time with the tune Aunt Sylvia's been singing,” whispered Glenn to the boy next him, who happened to be Roger.

“ Yes, and I think Mona Macdonald will be the nightingale,” whispered Roger in return. “ S-sh, there she is.”

Sure enough, from behind some tree, unseen, the little human nightingale trilled out her song, and all the while the small figures rocked and hummed Aunt Sylvia's melody.

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"My stars, that's a pretty sight an' a pretty tune," said Bartley Pearson when the humming and trilling stopped and Aunt Sylvia began her second verse. "Ain't it, Mis' Potter? Say, what's set you off to crying? Anything gone wrong?"

"No, there isn't, hasn't," whispered Mrs. Potter indignantly. "I declare you're enough to try the patience of a saint!"

Mr. Pearson turned a mild, perplexed face on her, but she avoided his gaze, moving closer to her husband.

"Well, women folks are the beatenest!" remarked Mr. Pearson to Mr. Lord when, the song being over, Mr. and Mrs. Potter stepped quickly away. "I was going to engage Mis' Potter in talk, and now she's cut and run. Where the young folks going now?"

Aunt Sylvia rose from her chair, setting down little Car'line, and took from the ground behind her a big wicker basket; this the children piled high with cushions, and gathered the others, one under each arm. Each little girl carried a dull red and a dark blue cushion against her white dress, and as the audience parted to let them pass, the procession, led by Aunt Sylvia singing and Desdemona trilling like a flute, filed through the gap and out into the grove.

There on the ground were many little back-rests,

made by Mr. Potter and his assistants, waiting for the cushions to be laid against them, while the other pillows were strewn about, in spots the children thought would be inviting—and which speedily proved to be so.

“And it was all Mrs. Carter’s planning,” Nancy told Miss Mary and Miss Althea when the winding procession had finished its task and she was free to speak to the latest guests. “And she’s given us the pleasure of you, too! Isn’t she lovely? And she’s stayed in the background all the time, so nobody but us will ever know how much she’s done.”

“I think she feels thanked enough in other ways, dear child,” said Miss Mary, looking at Nancy’s eyes so full of love and admiration for the graceful young woman who was coming toward them with her husband.

“Don’t you think so, sister?”

“I do,” said Miss Althea decidedly, “and so would anybody else.”

CHAPTER XIX

THE ADMIRAL JOINS THE ORCHESTRA

THERE was some one else whom Nancy wished to thank before that wonderful picnic was over. And the second surprise was greater even than the first. Nancy was learning to know the ways that Mrs. Carter's magic worked; it was not impossible that almost any one or anything might be brought to Beaumont Corners by the aid of her golden wand; but that magic could be worked with her grandfather—that Nancy had never for a moment dreamed.

When supper was over—and such a picnic supper as it was, with sandwiches, cakes, salads, coffee and lemonade, cold meats, and beaten biscuit!—Jack made an announcement which brought a round of applause.

“If our friends will kindly gather in groups, or as they please, in the space between the two trees marked with a chalk cross,” he said indicating two giant pines which stood a good distance apart, and back of which there was a gradual rise in the land, “my grandfather, Admiral Beaumont, would like to say a few words to you, after which the entertainment will close with a

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short concert given by the Camp Wind-Away Orchestra."

The audience gathered, as requested, the little people in front, their elders behind them. Some mothers held the babies who had gone to sleep, and a few drowsy heads leaned against broad shoulders, but for the most part the guests were wide awake and eager. They laughed again as the members of the orchestra took their seats on wooden chairs arranged by Sylvanus in a little clearing, opposite the audience, where there was a lovely view of the river for background, and off in the western sky the glow of the sunset.

"There's skillets for banjos, mother," whispered little Car'line Spencer; "see them! And there's a mortar 'n' pestle, see! And a tin horn, mother, like ours! and a dish-pan!"

"Sure enough," said her mother. "Well, I reckon we shall hear some queer noises now. But they're nice folks, and they've given us all a good time; it's a pity if we can't endure a little something to let 'em have their fun. My sakes, Car'line, look at that harmonica the General's got, made out of a clothes-horse! Well, I never! If that don't beat everything I ever saw for a contrivance!"

Mr. Pearson stepped across the space designed to

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separate the performers from the audience to view the harmonica at close range, the General having been assigned to a front seat.

"What do you expect to accomplish with that contraption?" he inquired, after surveying it with down-dropped mouth.

"Wait and see," counseled the General, and Mr. Pearson, in deference to the freely-expressed wishes of his neighbors, returned to the auditorium.

When the performers were all seated the Admiral, holding something which looked like a roll of manuscript in his hand, advanced to the edge of the orchestra, and standing beside the General he waited for a moment, bespeaking attention by his attitude and air.

"I do hope grandfather hasn't written a speech," thought Nancy, "because it would be so hard for him to read it, and it would probably be very long and full of large words. Oh, I hope he hasn't!"

Her fears were groundless, for the Admiral's words were few and unusually simple.

"It has been a pleasure to me to see you all here to-day," he said slowly, "and I hope there will be many more such pleasures while my life is spared. We are all grateful to the young people whose work has made your coming here possible. Shall we not give three

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cheers for the Beaumont Forestry League, my friends? Now, one—two—three!”

Such hearty cheers as rang through the grove; then, before their echo had died away, a chorus of boys' voices called lustily, “Three times three for the Admiral. Come on, now! *Shout!*”

And they shouted, while the old Admiral, leaning on his stick, bowed again and again. Once more, it seemed to him, a Beaumont had come into his own, and not a heritage of bondsmen and slaves, but of free-spoken, warm-hearted friends and neighbors from whom his hospitality brought rich returns of admiration and respect.

When the shouting was over, the Admiral slipped from its paper cover a round stick of bamboo which had an opening in its side and was hollow for two-thirds of its depth.

Aunt Sylvia clutched Sylvanus and Betty, between whom she stood, when she saw this object.

“Fo' de land's sake! dat's whar my taper-holder's been gone at dis las' fo'tnight!” she whispered to Betty. “You 'member I's kep' axin' you is you seen it?”

“One of my young friends, thinking I might like to be a member of the orchestra,” said the Admiral, hold-

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ing the little bamboo stick so that all might see it, "and realizing that at my age amusements are not as plentiful as in earlier years, has persuaded me to perform on this article which bears some likeness to the flute I played as a young man. He has given me a number of long and careful rehearsals and I trust I shall acquit myself creditably."

Whereupon, with no more words, the Admiral seated himself in the chair from which General Compton hastily removed his harmonica, and placing his flute at his lips, turned a grave face toward Mrs. Carter, as with a stove-lifter for baton, amid wild applause she stepped up on the soap box which was to serve for the conductor's stand.

The performers found the mirth of the audience so contagious that while they beat, pounded, rattled, jingled or sawed their instruments, their lips, through which a steady hum or whistle was supposed to proceed, often refused to remain puckered. They laughed until they nearly cried. Through all the hilarity only two persons maintained their gravity—Mrs. Carter, whose stove-lifter never failed in its steady beat, and the Admiral, whose eyes were fixed on the stove-lifter while his old fingers played on the bamboo stick, with all the earnestness of a professional flutist.

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When the last tune had been played and the Camp Wind-Away Orchestra had been generously applauded, the voice of Bartley Pearson rose.

"Before we start for home," he said, "I wisht we could have one more selection, rendered by Aunt Sylvia here, and the little Macdonald girl, with the rest of us humming along easy. I wisht we could have 'Old Black Joe.' "

And they did have it. When it was over, the picnickers collected their baskets and wraps, and, many of them still humming, started along the river path that led them back, under the clear pale sky from which a few early stars twinkled down on them, to their homes. The fathers carried the smallest children, and the mothers walked beside them.

Nancy went to Glenn, who stood at a place where he could watch the home-goers when they reached a curve in the path. His happy, tired face turned to her, when he heard her footsteps.

"Hasn't it been the grand day for the kiddies and the grown-ups, too?" he said. "It's been the best time I ever had, too."

"It ought to have been," said Nancy, softly. "Oh, Glenn, how did you get grandfather to play? Jack was saying to me a little while ago that *he* wouldn't

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really have dared ask him. And you did it, and grandfather liked it."

Glenn looked at her, through the gathering dusk, with his wide smile.

"Why, 'twasn't anything to *dare*," he said slowly. "The Admiral's just an old man, Nancy, and I thought he felt kind of left out, that was all. And I knew that none of you folks would want him to feel that way—and I knew—I knew he'd think I'd look at it just the way all the rest of the poor folks would," said the boy without a shade of either pride or humility in his tone—simply the frankness of truth. "And that if *I'd* like to see him taking part, *they* would ; and so I asked him—that's how it was."

CHAPTER XX

THE TREASURE FROM PIRATES' ROCK

THE bond between Glenn and the Beaumonts grew stronger with every day that passed. Nancy began to wonder how she could fill the boy's place when he went away to school, for the Admiral and the General had decided, and Glenn had agreed, that school was what he needed more than anything else for the next few years.

"But how'm I ever going to pay you back?" the boy asked, turning from one to the other of his counselors. "Supposing after you've spent a lot of money on me, I'm awful slow getting started in my practice, same as doctors most always are, even the best ones—and I'll be a good one," he added, his clear eyes on the Admiral's face; "I'm bound to be a good one!"

"The good ones always succeed at last, if not at first," said the General; "my old friend and I aren't in any hurry to have the money we're advancing paid back, my lad. There's a chance for scholarships in the school, too."

"I'll get one," and the look of dogged resolution

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that came into Glenn's face made the Admiral pound the floor with his stick.

"That's right," he said; "that's the way to feel, boy. You'll do."

While Nancy was wondering how she could keep her grandfather from missing Glenn when he went away from Beaumont Corners, there came across the sky of their happiness and pride in the boy a cloud, very small at first, but growing larger until it threatened to bring a storm that would leave distress and wreckage in its wake. There came an afternoon when Nancy heard with surprise Glenn's protesting voice, and then her grandfather's, raised in anger, from the piazza; then there was the sound of running feet—then silence, and last of all, the Admiral's voice demanding her presence at once.

"What 'is 'troubling you? Please, grandfather, tell me!" begged Nancy when she was confronted by the old man's wrathful, indignant face. "Wasn't Glenn here a few minutes ago?"

"He was," thundered the Admiral, "but he won't come again till he apologizes to me for calling your brother and the General and his boys a set of cruel, brutal life-destroyers."

"Oh, grandfather!" cried Nancy. "Glenn! to say

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such a thing as that! It doesn't sound one bit like him!"

"He said it by inference," the Admiral told her, grimly. "He is too gentle and sensitive himself, I gather, to go hunting—to indulge in a sport which gentlemen have followed for years, without damaging their reputation for tenderness. I told him so. He refused to go off with all the others, to-day, for the third time. Twice before I have thought he had other reasons for staying at home. But to-day, when I told him I didn't need him, and wasn't willing to accept the sacrifice of his pleasure, he told me the truth. He thinks hunting, for the pleasure of it, is wrong, I gathered from his remarks. Ah, well, perhaps we've made a mistake. Perhaps we'd better let him go back to his old ways of life."

Nancy clasped and unclasped her hands before she spoke, while the Admiral looked off over the meadows, his old face filled with bitter disappointment.

"Grandfather," said Nancy at last, in a very small voice, "do you think the birds haven't any right to live?"

"Right to live!" echoed the Admiral. "What foolishness is that, Nancy? Who said they hadn't any right to live?"

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"But the hunters take it from them, grandfather," persisted Nancy, in spite of the steel in the Admiral's glance. "When a lion or some animal bigger and stronger than we are kills a person, we think it is dreadful; but I suppose it is just their way of hunting, grandfather."

"Do you mean to compare a senseless, fluttering bird to a human being, Nancy?" sternly demanded the Admiral.

But Nancy held her ground in spite of him.

"I think I do, grandfather," she said clearly. "I think they are lovely, and happy, and never do any one harm—and they don't live so very long, anyway," she added wistfully. "Didn't grandmother love the birds, grandfather?"

The thought of the bird-houses, put away when his wife died, because he could not bear to see the birds fluttering in and out and remember that the one who had cared for them had gone, never to return—that thought came to the Admiral in a flash of remembrance, but he put it away.

"Your grandmother would not have presumed to criticize me or my guests," said the old man sternly. "You may go, Nancy, and send Sylvanus to me."

It was months since the Admiral had spoken to her

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so severely. Nancy knew he had been suffering physical pain for days, bearing it grimly, and she also knew how he resented the least criticism at first, although he often acknowledged its justice later.

"Oh, dear," she sighed, as she went through the house and out to the barn to summon Sylvanus. "I do wish this hadn't happened. Poor Glenn—and poor grandfather!"

When she had found Sylvanus and sent him to the piazza, she walked slowly down the path toward the camp. Marguerite was sleeping off a cold, with Mrs. Compton to guard her. Dick was spending the afternoon at the Sigourneys' by special invitation. Desdemona was making a sketch of him holding a big yellow cat which had attached itself to the Sigourney household.

"Perhaps Aunt Sylvia is down at the camp with Mrs. Dole," thought Nancy. "I believe I'll go down and see. Perhaps we can find Glenn and comfort him."

If she had taken the path to the rose garden, instead of going through the orchard, Nancy would have found Aunt Sylvia, and Glenn, too. Aunt Sylvia had heard the Admiral's angry voice, and then the hurrying footsteps; more than that she had seen the boy's troubled face as he fled, and had noticed which path he took.

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"I reckon 'tis 'bout time I went down in de gyarden and looked round jess a mite," muttered Aunt Sylvia. "'Bout time dere was some rose hips dat mought be cut off to 'vantage. I reckon I'll jess take a little time right now to see what dar is to be done."

She got her shears from their nail on the kitchen wall, and followed the path the boy had taken a few minutes before. Through the arbor she went, and along to the corner where the big geranium rioted beside Nancy's old favorite, the ambrosia. Before the geranium stood Glenn, motionless, his face white, his mouth set, and his eyes dark with trouble.

"Now dar ain't anyt'ing in dis worl' dat ought to make you feel like you does now," said Aunt Sylvia's velvet voice. "You look at de sunshine, boy, an' you breave in de air, an' don' be so down-hearted. If you's got a trouble, boy, it'll pass by; eberything in dis worl' 'cepting de air an' de sunshine an' t'ings like dat, passes by, an' don' come no mo'."

Glenn looked at her, but there was no smile on his face.

"All summer long I've been wishing I could do something for the folks that have done so much for me," he said dully; "some *big* thing, I mean. And now, 'stead of that, what's happened? The Admiral's

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mad at me, and he'll stay so. I can't change him, Aunt Sylvia, because I can't change myself. I won't kill birds even to please the Admiral and Nancy."

Aunt Sylvia's eyes blazed, as she laid her hand on his arm.

"Don' you speak o' my lamb dat-a-way," she commanded. "My little Miss Nancy dat wouldn't hurt de weeni-est t'ing dat eber flew! Don' you know dat, boy?" and she shook him by the arm, but her voice softened at the end, as she looked at him.

"She doesn't mind her brother Jack's doing it," said Glenn miserably. "She thinks everything he does is just right. So I s'posed ——"

"Folks gets into piles o' trouble, *s'posing*," said Aunt Sylvia. "Now you tell me all de circ'mstances; lie right down comf'table on de grass, an' I'll sit on dis yer bench. And 'fore you begin, you let me tell you one t'ing—I's knowed de Adm'ral since befo' he growed up, and dere's no stay mad to him; dere's plenty ob *get* mad, boy, but not a mite o' *stay* mad. Now you tell me de whole story."

And folding her arms, Aunt Sylvia listened, with many nods of her old head and frequent "M-m's."

"And so I reckon I'd better scoot back to the city," said Glenn forlornly at the end of his recital, "where they

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won't be bothered with me. I reckon the Admiral's made up his mind they can't make a gentleman of me, the way he'd hoped, 'cause while he was talking he let out a lot of things I don't do right that I ought to have caught on to by this time. I reckon I'd better go back to the kind o' folks I belong with; I can get my newspaper route again; and there's the hospital. Only I wish I could do something big for 'em before I go back. I kept hoping I'd find that treasure."

Aunt Sylvia let him talk, her old eyes resting quietly on his face. She had heard boys talk, had helped them through their troubles, many, many times in her long life.

"Now you mind me, boy," she said, but her voice was gentle and persuasive. "You go down into de camp, and get yo' little shooting-piece, and go practice on de target fo' a while. De pop-popping will kind o' let off yo' feelings, an' while you's at it, *I'll* 'tend to de Adm'ral. I's done it befo' now," said Aunt Sylvia, "and I's done it *good!*"

When Nancy entered the camp by the little winding path, it seemed to her she never had known such stillness. It was one of the September days when there is scarcely a rustle of the leaves; scarcely a perceptible movement of clouds in the faint blue of the sky; when

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all the hills are hung with purple haze, and the whole world seems waiting for something to happen.

"It's so still, you can *feel* it," said Nancy to herself. "It's as if everything were asleep. Mrs. Dole is ;" and she laughed softly as she heard a gentle, steady sound which came from the tiny bedroom of Wind-Away Lodge, so she walked around it. "I'd think she'd like to take her nap outdoors instead of in that stuffy little place, on such a warm day. Now where shall I go? I believe I'll go to Pirates' Rock. Perhaps poor Glenn is there ; perhaps I can think of something to say to him that will help a little bit—though I don't know what it could be."

She walked slowly, her pretty head bent, thinking over the puzzle of how two people could both be brave and both be kind, and yet feel so differently about many things which seemed to Nancy to concern bravery and kindness more than anything else. She was not ready to think that her beloved brother would be cruel to anything that lived, and yet—"The birds don't need to be killed," said Nancy, thinking out loud as she reached Pirates' Rock. "They aren't harming any one, and we don't need them for food, as we do chickens." Nancy caught her breath. "Perhaps we don't need chickens," she said, and began to puzzle over the problem.

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The air was so warm, and the place so still that Nancy began to get drowsy, as she sat leaning on her elbow, looking out over the river.

“Chickens aren’t like lovely birds that fly and shine against the sky,” she said at last. “They certainly do not seem one bit like birds. I think chickens were meant to—be—eaten,” she added drowsily; “and nobody—shoots——”

The puzzle tinged her dreams, perhaps, but she had no more waking thoughts to give to it. The place was so still, the little figure stretched on the great rock so motionless that a visitor no one would have welcomed stole into the camp from the deep woods, and noiselessly drew nearer and nearer to Nancy, now with head upraised, now hidden in the short grass.

Glenn had followed Aunt Sylvia’s bidding. Half an hour after Nancy seated herself on Pirates’ Rock, the boy approached it from the river path. He had made up his mind that he would practice shooting at a big stone across the river, a queer shaped stone which had afforded practice to all the boys more than once during the summer. He walked softly, not even whistling as he usually did; he had not quite heart enough to whistle, although Aunt Sylvia’s words had been vaguely

comforting. Somehow, although he could not guess how, Glenn felt sure Aunt Sylvia would set him right with the old Admiral.

"Why, there's Nancy—and she's asleep," he said under his breath, as he came out of the path at the foot of the rock, and then, in the next second, he saw something which sent his heart into his throat.

He could not even think of one of the prayers he knew so well, as he half knelt, aiming at the sinister head, upraised, so close now to Nancy's tumbled yellow curls.

"Oh, make me steady! Make me kill him! Make me steady!" cried the soul of the little Irish boy, and while it cried he fired.

Nancy woke, frightened. Close to her lay a great throbbing coil of something from which the life had gone.

"Oh, what is it? Where did he come from, Glenn?" she asked, shaking with fright, as the boy ran to her. "And you've killed him! Oh, I was dreaming about shots, and then there came a real one! I was sure it was real, Glenn!"

"Real! Well, I reckon 'twas real if anything ever was," said the boy, with a queer shake in his voice. "He'd 've had you in another minute. I didn't know

you ever had snakes like that here, Nancy. Isn't he the ugly chap?"

Nancy tried to look, but she could not bring herself to it. And there was no need, for at that moment there came a sound of voices, and Jack Beaumont, followed by the Compton boys, with the General bringing up the rear, rounded the turn in the path.

"Here's the renegade," cried Jack half scornfully, as he saw Glenn. "Been sitting on that old rock all afternoon day-dreaming? Nancy—Nancy, what's the matter?"

That evening the Admiral held court on the Beaumont piazza. His afternoon had been far from agreeable; first had come the trouble with Glenn; then the disappointment at Nancy's lack of sympathy with his views; then a trying season of disciplining Sylvanus, ending with his dismissal to the barn from which he had been summoned; then a time of loneliness, and last of all, before the arrival of the triumphal procession with Glenn in its midst, a chastening period with Aunt Sylvia.

"How she managed to say so much in five minutes, I don't know and never shall," the Admiral informed the General days afterward, "but I think

there was nothing on her mind to say that she left unsaid."

But now it was growing dark. The story of Glenn's shot had been told and retold to the old man's growing pride. And Glenn was sitting close at his left hand, while Nancy was at his right, and Jack, on the top step, was at his grandfather's feet. Mr. Sigourney was there with his mother, and Desdemona gazed at Glenn with awe and admiration, while Marguerite had a firm clutch on Nancy's skirt which lay touching her own.

Aunt Sylvia hovered in the background, never far from her little mistress, while a glance at the darkening doorway of the hall would have revealed Betty's figure, and another glance at the lawn near a small shrub would have shown Sylvanus who had been trimming it, and picking its leaves from the ground one by one, for the last hour.

There came a silence as the moon, riding higher and higher, rode at last above the tallest tree, and shone down on the piazza. The Compton boys, in an excited group on the steps with their father and mother, pointed to it, twitching Mrs. Compton's sleeve. They were really beyond speech for the time being.

"Ah," said the Admiral, as if he were greeting a tardy guest, "the moon at last. That was all we

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needed to make the evening perfect. I've been thinking what we might do to keep this day always in grateful remembrance. We all have our differences of opinion," here he patted Glenn's hand encouragingly, "and we're all of us likely to be mistaken." He turned to Jack, and held out his hand to his grandson. "What can you suggest that we might do, Jack?" he asked.

"I, sir," said the young man slowly. "I don't know—unless—suppose, sir, we agreed to keep the shots of the Beaumont Forestry League for such play, and such work as Glenn has done. All the boys will agree to it, if I say so."

"That's right," said Ted to Roger; "whatever Jack says goes."

"Ah, well," said the Admiral, "that might be the best way to hold the day in remembrance; at least it is one way; it is one way, and a good one. But ——"

He sat tapping the arms of his chair while the others waited, silently. At last he put out his hand and gathered Nancy's little fingers into his clasp. Then he turned to Glenn, and in the moonlight they could all see that he was smiling.

"This little girl told me at supper to-night that you have always believed, and still believe, she thinks, that

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Pirates' Rock holds treasure," he said ; " she told me you had wished greatly to find it for us. Let me tell you now, my boy, that no treasure the old rock can hold could compare in value with the one you saved for me there, to-day. You may rest content."

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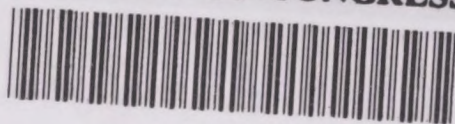
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